HISTORY OF THE SIKH GURUS

(A Comprehensive Study)

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HISTORY OF THE SIKH GURUS

(A Comprehensive Study)

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'A Comprehensive History of the Panjab', 'The Voice of Guru Gobind Singh', and 'Vishva Sabhyata Da Itihas'.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to S. Inderjit Singh, Chairman, Punjab and Sind Bank Ltd. who is an ornament to the Sikh Community and who enshrines in his person the effulgent passion to accomplish the great Sikh ideal of wedding the spiritual advancement with economic salvation of the down-trodden.

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GRATITUDE
TO
SANT HARCHAND SINGH
SARDAR-I-AZAM

I owe a debt of gratitude to Sant Harchand Singh Ji Longowal who symbolises the passion in the service of God and man and whose life and example are the primal impulse behind this venture.

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IMPRIMIS

I have planned this book with the specific purpose of presenting to the lovers of history a comprehensive account of the ten Gurus of the Sikhs, focussing their exclusive attention on the part played by them in moulding the history of India as also lending new tinges to the history of mankind as a whole. It is not a miracle but the result of the sustained efforts of the Gurus, their wide vision, strong commitment to and espousal of the cause of the welfare of the people and their penchant for organisation that all those who came under their influence were transformed into willing instruments of fertilizing and fostering the progressive and integrating forces.

True, a number of books have already explored the subject; but these books are either sketchy or partial. They, certainly, are lacking in the historical objectivity. Kavi Santokh Singh's magnum opus, 'Suraj Prakash' is more a book of devotional poetry than that of history. The author's approach is not critical; it is primarily theological. Whatever information is embedded in his book reveals that he was more after the adoration of characters than the evaluation of events which form the matrix of history, so much so that he, sometimes, went to the extent of pruning the facts to suit his theme. At places, the events are so much soaked in mythology that they lose their identity and verve.

Mr. Macauliffe wrote on the lives of the Gurus but he too, inspite of his erudition, could not do full justice. His writings reflect only traditional point of view.

'Gur Bilas, Padshahi Chhevin' by Sohan and 'Gur Bilas Padshahi Dasvin' by Koer Singh and 'Gur Bilas' Padshahi Chhevin by Sukha Singh also do not unfold the story of the Sikh Gurus in the true sense of history as these works present reactions of the Sikhs to the oppression of the ruling Muslim class of the period in which these books were written—the fact which coloured the judgement of scholars.

Giani Gian Singh, the celebrated author of the Tawarikh Guru Khalsa and Panth Parkash took pains to write a detailed history of the Sikh Gurus but his portrayal of history did not take into account the landscape of socio-economic forces operating during the period. Besides this, the author's much involvement in theology and Indian mythology prejudiced his historical judgement.

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The Western Scholars after the annexation grew keenly interested in the history of the Panjab, especially of the Sikhs whose rule they had put an end to. On analysis, we come across three categories of books written by the Europeans. In the first category, fall those works written mainly to familiarise the British Administration with the habits, customs and varied reactions of the people to different challenges. In the second category come those works which were produced with a view to bolstering up racial prejudices among the Jats so that they might become egocentric enough to deny the good influence of Sikhism on them. As a matter of fact, through this device the Britishers had designs to weaken the Sikh unity thereby demolishing the faith among the Sikhs that they would rise again one day to establish their independent rule. In the works comprising the third category, the authors tried to write down objective history, as exemplified by Cunningham's 'History of the Sikhs'. Even then the authors belonging to this category could not rise above racial prejudices and conqueror's complex.

In the recent past late Dr. I. B. Bannerjee wrote 'Evolution of the Khalsa' giving detailed account of the Sikh Gurus. No doubt, the author consulted many of the original sources, tried to piece together the events in a scientific manner, and harnessed modern and scientific methodology but even this great work could not furnish the whole information, obviously on account of the fact that quite a lot of material had not yet been unearthed. Dr. G.C. Narang's "Transformation of Sikhism" also did not do full justice to the subject because of his pre-occapation with Arya Samajist's persuasions.

A Short History of the Sikhs by Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh is concise and objective but the information given therein is too meagre. Only seventy pages are devoted to the period which is undoubtedly very significant because Sikhism developed all its traditions, institutions and built up its social, political and cultural ethos during this very period.

Quite recently, many new sources of history have been discovered. Bhat Vahis have thrown a flood of light on the subject. Many commentaries on the Sikh Scripturers have highlighted the hitherto untouched and unexplored areas of the Sikh history. A good deal of work has been done on various religious movements then surging and sweepring through the length and breadth of the province. Similarly historians have dived deep into the socio-economic condition of the period under study. Recently conducted sociological surveys have furnished a lot of information which dates back to the Guru period. Surveys conducted by the Punjabi University under the insightful

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stewardship of Dr. Fauja Singh regarding the itineraries of the Gurus have also thrown fresh light on the period.

In view of this, it was but in the fitness of things to retell and reshape the history of the Sikh Gurus.

I feel privileged for having embarked upon this subject. This book is the outcome of my deep study of the contemporary and semi-contemporary sources. I have made extensive use of Bhat Vahis, Guru Kian Sakhian by Kaushik, Shaheed Bilas, Assamese Buranjees etc. etc.

I have tried my utmost to interpret the events connected with the lives of the Gurus against the politico-socio-economic back-drop. I have made an appraisal of the message of Sikh religion in terms of the response not to the contemporary challenges but also to the challenges which the mankind is likely to face in times to come. I have also tried to assess the value of the programmes of Sikhism from the view-point of the logistics pertaining to the rise and fall of Indian Civilization. Through these pages one may visualise the scarlet thread binding different events and matters, the thread being the Guru's heightened accent on spiritual values and global fraternity. My approach to the study in hand is integrated and objective.

As a result of the application of the methodology to the events, certain striking conclusions have been arrived at. It has been conclusively proved that Sikhism emerged not as a part of Bhakti Movement; on the other hand it was an independent system having its own individuality, its own stance and a response of its own kind. The oft-held view that Guru Nanak undertook travels for five times has been rejected in favour of the view that Guru went on missionary tours only thrice. The sequence of sojourns has also been rectified in the light of fresh findings. I have also brought to lime-light the part played by the orthodox reaction spearheaded by the Naqashbandies, causing the martyrdom of the Gurus. Guru Hargobind's choronology of battles has been revised, his mission has been assessed in the context of contemporary socio-political currents and the proposed framework of the society. The controversies regarding the manner of succession of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the purpose of his visit to different places in the Eastern region of the country, the foundation of Chak Nanki and his arrests at Dhamdan, Agra and Malikpur, the visit of the deputation of sixteen leaders of Kashmir under Pt. Kirpa Ram of Mattan, the exact period of imprisonment in the Kotwali of Chandni Chowk have been successfully set at rest.

The chapter "On Guru Gobind Singh" not only furnishes details which were hitherto unknown, but also it provides occasion

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to perceive and feel the political, economic and ideological forces operating and shaping the psyche of the people. The chapters on 'Sikh Orders' 'Sikh Social ideals' and 'Sikh Polity' are illuminating and enable the students of Sikh history to understand clearly and lucidly the Sikhism in its totality.

The book has been divided into different parts—each one dealing with specific problems and the distinctive phase of the development of Sikhism.

Except where otherwise indicated dates are all A.D. The translated version of most of the passages from Guru Granth Sahib is not my own; in fact, most of these have been taken from Macauliffe's 'Sikh Religion (i to vi)', Guru Granth translated by Dr. Gopal Singh Dardi and Mcleod's 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'. I am really grateful to the distinguished authors of the works referred to above.

It is my proud privilege to thank Late Sardar Bahadur Mangal Singh Mān, a great Sikh savant who not only introduced me to the house beautiful of Sikh History but also helped me financially in my educational career.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Dr. Fauja Singh, the Head of the History Department, Panjabi University, Patiala and take the oppurtunity of acknowledging it with the warmest thanks. Really he is one of the rare scholars who take pleasure in sharing their research with their junior colleagues.

I am also thankful to Principal Gursewak Singh, Government College, Sangrur for placing at my disposal the books in the College library, to Shri Avadh Narain and late Shri Matwal Chand, both librarians at Government College, Sangrur and Shri O. P. Goyal, District Library, Sangrur for their stimulating cooperation, to my daughter Anant Vir for rendering help in more than one ways and to Shri Gurcharan Singh Premi for preparing type-script. My special thanks are for Mrs. Daljit Kaur Gandhi M.A., B.Ed. for correcting the proofs. Equally thankful am I to Principal Siv Raj Kaur Akal College for Women, Sangrur for rendering assistance in the chapter 'Sikh Polity'. So am I grateful to Principal Prithipal Singh Kapur for allowing me to make use of his research work and Principal Tript Kaur, Guru Nanak College, Banga for furnishing much-needed information pertaining to different aspects of Sikhism. I am also indebted to Principal Sat Bir Singh, a renowned theologian and Sikh historian for his general guidance and encouragement.

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I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my sense of gratitude to Shri Ram Narain Kapur, the proprietor of Gur Das Kapur & Sons (P) Ltd., who has not only published this book but has always shown his genuine interest in Sikh Culture and Sikh Values.

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Perspective

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Chapter I

COMPOSITION OF THE PEOPLE

COMPOSITION OF THE PEOPLE OF THE PUNJAB

The composition of the people of the Punjab underwent a change with every new conquest; but at the time of Guru Nanak it was more or less, as under.

Dardus, Dungar

In the valley of the Upper Indus, that is in Ladakh and little Tibet, the prevailing caste was the Bhati Sub-Division of the great Tartar variety of the human race. Lower down that classical stream or in Gilgit and Chulass, the remains of the old and secluded races of Dardus and Dungars are still to be found. The people of Kashmir have from time to time been mixed with races from the north, the south and the west, and while their language was Kashmiri dialect of Punjab and their faith Muhammedan, the manner of the primitive Kash or Katch tribes have been influenced by their proximity to Tartars.

Kukas, Bambas

The hills westward from Kashmir to the Indus are inhabited by Kukas and Bambas, of whom little is known. In the hills south of Kashmir, and west of Jhelum to Attock and Kalabagh on the Indus are found Gakhars, Gujars, Khattars, Awans, Janjuas.

In the districts of either side of the Indus south of Kalabagh and likewise around Multan, the population is partly Baluch and partly Jat intermixed however, with Aroras, Arains, Dogras. Rajputs inhabit the area in the neighbourhood of Jamuna and Kanets. Goddies who claim to be Kshatryas also belong to this area.

Gakhar

Gakhar was an important tribe who for long continued to retain independence both in Jhelum itself and in the neighbouring districts of Rawalpindi and parts of Hazara district. They possessed great power due to their unity which enabled them to oust other tribes like Awan, Gujjar, Khattars and Janjuas[1].

The origin of Gakhar[2] is shrouded in mystery. The story of most of the Gakhars is that they conquered Kashmir and ruled

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1. Glossary of Castes and Tribes. Vol. II, p. 274.
2. Ferishta Vol. I, pp. 44-5. Ferishta confused Gakhars with Khokars. According to General Court they descended from the Greeks. Cunningham regards them representative of the savage Garraridal. In view of the Ibbetson, they were of the Turanian origin. Tradition considers them the descendants of Kao Gohar and Kai Gwar-Shatt of the Kainani family once reigning in Ispahin.

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that region for many generations but were eventually driven back to Kabul whence they entered the Punjab in company with Sultan Mohammud of Ghazni early in the eleventh century. The story is without any foundation because as in Ferishta's account, we find a Gakhar army resisting Mehamud. It is, at any rate, certain that they held their present possession before the Mohammedan invasion of India.

They professed Hindu faith and were converted to Islam, probably after the Ghori rule. Ferishta's account of the Gakhars as a tribe of wild barbarians, without either religion or morality, practising polyandry and infanticide was perhaps due to their opposition and resistance to the Muslim rule in the early days. Babur in his first invasion (A.D. 1519) had to encounter opposition of the Gakhar chief, Hati Khan whom he defeated. In subsequent invasions, Babur made friends with the Gakhars and procured from them auxiliary force. When Humayun, having been defeated by Sher Shah had to go on exile, the Gakhar Chiefs took his side, much to the chagrin of Sher Shah who parried their country and built the fort of Rohtas about ten miles from Jhelum to bridle their pride.

Notwithstanding all this, the tribe was never subdued and on Humayun's return to power began to grow powerful. The Gakhars maintained their independent status till they were subdued by the Sikhs.

Gujjar

Gujjars who were numerous around Jhelum, in Hasan Abdal and throughout the Hazara district and thinly scattered towards the north where they gave their name to important places such as Gujranwala, Gujrat and Gujarkhan. They were turbulent, unreliable and particularly known for their unreliability. As to their origin, nothing precise is known, yet we subscribe to the view of Ibbetson 'that Jats and Gujars and perhaps Ahirs also, are all of one ethnic stock.'[1]

Khokar

Khokars[2] occupied a tract in the salt range, and the route between Lahore and Ghazna was often infested by them. They remained a source of trouble in the north-west in the middle ages in spite of repeated punitive expeditions. Even during the period under review, they did not cease to be troublesome and owed allegiance to none.

Salt Range was the main habitat of Awans. The Awans claim their Arab origin and consider themselves as descendants of Qutab Shah himself descendant of Ali. At the time of Babur, all of them were Muslims by faith and tribal in affiliations.

Khattar

Khattar is another tribe of this region. Its origin is also

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1. A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes, p. 310.
2. Sen Asit Kumar : People and Politics in early Medieval India, 13

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shrouded in mystery. While some scholars assert that they had Rajput origin[1], others say that they originally belonged to Khurasan[2], China[3] or Ghazni. The Khattars were divided into two branches, Kala (black) Khattar and Chitta (white) Khattar, although both the branches were connected with each other through inter-marriage.

As regards social position, they hold an intermediate place, ranking below Gakhars, Awans, Ghebas Jodras and other high-class Rajputs. These people observed strict purdah. Their social organisation was tribal and they considered it their sacred duty to pay their homage to Shah Abdul Wahab at Barot.

Janjuas

Janjuas, a Rajput tribe was scattered over the whole of salt range tract but was gradually dispossessed of by Gakhars in the north and by the Awans in the west. On the eve of Babur's invasion in 1524, they held only the central and eastern parts of the range as tribal territory.

According to Babur, the Janjuas were old enemies of the Gakhars. A headman among them received the title of Rai while the younger brothers and sons of a Rai were styled Malik.

Afghan

Peshawar and the hills which surrounded it were peopled by various races of Afghans such as Yusafzais and Mohmads in the north and west, Khalils and others in the centre and Afridis, Khattiks and Lodies in the south and the east. Likewise the hills, south of Kohat and districts of Tonk and Bannu, were peopled by Waziries and others.

The original Afghans were a race of probably Jewish or Arab extraction. Tradition goes that the Prophet was pleased with the eminent services of Kais, the leader of the Afghans in his religious war and in token thereof, he conferred on him the title of 'Pathan' the syrian word for raider and it was thus how the Afghans began to be called as such. But this does not seem to be the whole truth. According to Herodotus, about the 5th and 6th century of our era, an erruption of scythian tribes from beyond the Hindu Kush into the Indus valley drove a colony of the Buddhist Ghandhari, the Ghandhari of Herodotus. One of the four divisions of the Ghandhari was known as Pactyan, now known as Pathans.

But the term Afghan, during our period of study, included, firstly the original Afghans of Jewish race whose principal tribes were Tarin, Abdali, Durrani, and Sherani, and secondly the descendants of fugitive Ghandhari who included Yusafzai, Mohamud and other tribes such as Afridi, Khatak, Dadi, all of Indian origin. The Afghans of Jewish extraction had embraced Islam during the

1. Cracraft quoted in Glossary of the Tribes and Castes, Vol. II by Sir D. Shhetsonl Rawalpindi Gazetteer of 1883-4.
2. Griffin Lepel : Punjab Chiefs, pp. 561-9.
3. Archaeological Survey Reports, p. 80

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time of Mahmud Ghazanavi and particularly during the period of Shahab-ud-din Ghori when Arab missionaries with the title of Sayyad and Indian converts who were called Sheikhs spread through the country. On the eve of Babur's invasion, all of them were the bigoted followers of the Sunni sect, hating Shias and non-Muslims. Ghilzai[1] was the most important tribe till the rise of the Durrani powers. Lodies also got prominence next only to the Ghilzaies. Lodi section gave to Delhi the Lodi and Sur dynasties. In the rugged fastnesses of mountains, the people led a wild, free, active life.[2] But the Pathans of the territory away from the mountains had been much softened, although the root tendencies had not undergone any remarkable change.

Pathan

Pathans or Afghans were organised on tribal basis. Each tribe was further divided into sections or clans which had its leading men known as Maliks. In many tribes, there was Khankhel or Chief House, usually the eldest branch of the tribe, whose Malik was known as Khan, who acted as Chief of the whole tribe. But he was seldom more than their leader and their agent in dealing with others. He possessed influence rather than power and the real authority rested with the Jirgah, a democratic council composed of all Maliks. The tribe or clan are alike distinguished by patronymics formed from the name of the common ancestor by the addition of the word Zai or Khel, Zai being the corruption of Pashto zai meaning 'son' while khel is an Arabic word meaning an association or company.

The social customs were not alike with all the sections of Pathan. They differed from tribe to tribe. Pathans beyond Indus would claim to be endagamous but, on the eastern side of it, they could not observe this rule with rigidity. As a race, they strictly secluded their families but the poorer tribes and poorer members of all the tribes were prevented from doing so. They were extraordinarily jealous of the female honour. The rules, they observed as regards inheritance, were tribal and not Mohammedan and tended to keep property within the agnatic society, though a few educated families had begun to follow Muslim law.

They loved independence intensely, and with fanaticism of the extreme, they would protect it. The Afghans had since ancient times never considered it proper to have a king as their pride and arrogance would not let them bow and prostrate before one of their own kith and kin. Further, if they agreed to call one a king, they feared that they would, therefore, reduce themselves to the level of servants; they would rather like all of them to be rated equals. At the time of Babur, Lodies were

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1. Ghalzai are a race probably of Turkish origin, their name being another form of Kilchi, the Turkish word for swordsman (Punjab Tribes and Castes p. 64).
2. Refer to Punjab Castes by Dogbey, page 58.

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dominating the Punjab as well as Delhi.

In the districts of either side of the Indus south of Kalabagh and likewise around Multan, the population was partly Baluch and partly Jat intermixed, however, with Aroras and Arains. Dogra Rajputs inhabited the area in neighbourhood of Jamuna and Kanets. Goddies who claim to be Kshatryas also belonged to this area.

Baloch

Baloch's origin like so many other tribes referred earlier, is a matter of dispute. Pottinger claimed for the Baluch race a Turkoman origin, and Sir T. Joldich and others an Arab descent. Bellow assigned them Rajput descent on very inadequate philological grounds, while Burton, Lassen and others have maintained that they are, at least in the mass, of Iranian race. This last theory is supported by Mr. Longworth Dames who shows that the Baluch came into their present locations in Mekran and on the Indian border from parts of the Iranian plateau further to the west and north, bringing with them a language of the old Persian stock, with many features derived from the Zendor old Bacterian rather than the Western Persian[1].

About the middle of the 15th century, the Bruhi, a tribe believed to be of Dravadian origin drove the Balochs out of the fertile valley of Kalat and established supremacy over their northern tribes. The Kalat tribes moved eastward into the lower Sulemans driving the Pathans before them along the range. While the Balochs from Sindh began to spread up the Indus, many of these later took service with the Langah rulers of Multan and were granted lands along the river. About A.D. 1480[2] Ismail Khan and Fateh Khan, the two sons of Malik Sohrab Khan, and Ghazi Khan, son of Haji Khan founded the three deras which still bear their names (Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Fateh Khan), and having overcome the Lodies at Sitapur established themselves as independent rulers.

Their social organisation was tribal. The tribe (Tuman) under its chief or Tumandar was subdivided into small number of clans (para) with their muqaddams or headman, and each clan into more numerous septs (phalli). Below the phalli, came the families. The clans were based upon common descent. The sept is only an extended family. The tribal names are often patronymics ending in the Balochi termination 'Ani' such as Gurchani, Bala Chani, etc. An individual is commonly known by the name of his clan or sept. Marriage within the sept was forbidden and this appeared to be only restriction.

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1. A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes, Vol, II, p. 41.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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The Balochis freely married jat women but on rare occasions, gave their daughters to them.

Like Pathans, a Balochi was jealous of female honour. In matters of inheritance, he did not follow the Islamic law but kept property in the family by confining succession to agnates.[1] Marriage was always solemnized according to orthodox Muslim law, but a form called 'Tan Bakshi'[2] (giving of the person) was also recognised. Adoption was not recognised except possibly among the Baloch of Sangarh and those of Rajanpur. Concubinage was not unusual. Concubines were called 'suret' and their children 'suretwala'.[3]

Although a Muslim by faith, a Balochi would not observe Islamic rites. His frame was shorter, more spare and wiry than that of his neighbour in the north, though generations of independence had given to him a bold and manly bearing. He was fond of riding and tending mares and the breed of horses, he reared, was the celebrated one throughout northern India.

Arora

The Balochs were mixed in considerable number of Aroras and sprinkling of Arians. In fact, half the Arora population dwelt in the Multan divison and Derajat, though they were to be found, like the Khatries, all over the country. Aroras claim to be Khattries, and aver that like their counterparts they were dispersed by Pars Ram. Folk etymology indeed holds that when so persecuted, they denied their caste and described it as 'Aur'[4] (other). Aroras were organised in a way very similar to that of the Khattries, its primary divisions being the geneological sections as in all Hindu castes; but it had, at the same time, four territorial groups viz. Northern, Southern, Western, Sindhi. Among different sub-castes of Aroras, certain prejudices regarding inter-marriage existed. Widow marriage was in theory reproached, but in practice tolerated among the Aroras. The customary law of the Arora differed from both Hindu Law and the ordinary land customs. In its main features, it resembled that of the Hindus generally in the South-West Punjab and one of its distinctive features was the *Sawai*, one extra quarter share which went to the eldest son. At the time of Babur, they possessed no political stance.

As a class, they were intelligent, frugal and enterprising.

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1. A Glossary of Castes and Tribes, Vol. II, p. 45.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 49.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
4. According to a tradition current in Gujrat, the Aroras were driven by Persian towards Multan near which they founded Arorkot. Cursed by a faqir the town became desolate and the Aroras left by its three gates on the north, south and west. Whence the three main groups into which they are now divided. (A Glossary of Tribes and Castes Vol. II, p. 17.)

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In the rest of the Punjab consisting of vast plains stretching to the Jamna and beyond, the country was inhabited by agricultural tribes of Jats and Rajputs.

Jat

Jats are well-known in the medieval history for their implacable enemy towards all foreign conquerors and invaders. Babur says in his Memoir 'if anybody goes into Hindustan, the Jats and Gujjars always pour down in countless hordes from hills and plain for loot in bullock and buffaloes[1]. As a matter of fact, the Jats were capable not only of rebellion to voice their grievances, but they also sometimes formed Mandals[2] or confederacies with other kindred tribes to strengthen their hands.

There were, however, Jats and Jats. The Jat of the Sikh tract was the typical jat of the Punjab. The jat on the Bikaner border of the Punjab, known as Bagri contrasted strongly with the stalwart and independent husbandsman of the Malwa. On the lower Indus, the word Jat is applied generally generically to a congeries of tribes of Jats proper, Rajputs, lower castes and mongrels who have no points in common save the Mohammedan religion, their agricultural occupation and their subordinate position. In the great western grazing grounds, it was impossible to draw any sure line between Rajputs and Jats. The state of affairs in the Salt Range tract was also similar.

As to their origin, it is difficult to say anything with certainty. According to Tod, the Jats are descendants of one of the twenty six ruling dynasties that belonged to the Indo-scythian tribes. Ibbetson[3] also subscribes to this theory. So are the views of Cunningham with the difference that Rajputs belonged to the first wave of immigrants of the Aryan stock while the Jats belonged to their later[4] wave from the north-west, probably of Scythian race.

How and when did they spread in the Punjab and other areas of the country is also not clear. Cunningham holds that they entered the Punjab from their home on the Oxus very strictly after the meds or mands who also were Indo-scythians and who moved into the Punjab about a century before Christ. Jats seemed to have first occupied the Indus valley as far down as Sindh, whither the Meds followed them about the beginning of the present era. One thing, however, is certain that before the earliest Mohammedan invasion, the Jats had spread into the Punjab proper where they were finally established in the beginning of the 11th century. During the time of Babur, many Jats particularly in the Trans-Indus

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1. Memoirs of Babur (Beveradge Translation, p. 454.)
2. Mandal means a confederacy, union of several villages and tribes for a common object and mutual assistance (History of Jats by Qanungo, p. 32).
3. Gadbey—Punjab Castes and Tribes, p. 47.
4. *Ibid.*

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area and the Trans-Ravi area of the Punjab had embraced Islam.

The Jats, taken as a class, were well-known for their spirit of freedom and equality, and this was perhaps the reason that they refused to listen to Brahmins and Ulemas. The upper caste Hindus' denigration of the Jats did not, in the least, lower the Jats in their own eyes, nor elevate the Brahmins or the Kshatryas in the Jats' estimation. On the contrary, they assumed a somewhat condescending attitude towards the Brahmin whom he considered little better than a soothsayer or a beggar. The jat was born the worker and the warrior. He tilled his land with sword girded round his waist.

Rajputs

Rajputs too, formed a considerable part of the people of the Punjab. Though the Rajputs belong to the same stock of which the Jats are, yet the circumstances so influenced them that they began to consider themselves as a separate entities. They were brave, caste-conscious and possessed of feudalistic tendencies.

Pride of blood was their strongest characteristic and it appeared as if it were the essence of their Rajput-hood. They were conscious of the integrity of their communal property in the village lands, seldom admitting strangers to share it with them. They were poor husbandmen, and preferred pastoral to agricultural pursuits, looking upon all manual labour as derogatory and the actual operation of ploughing as degrading.

The Rajputs of the Punjab might be broadly divided into four groups.[1] First come the Rajputs of the Delhi Territory and Jamuna valley for the most part belonging to the two great tribes of Chauhan and Tunwar which gave Delhi its most famous dynasties. Next came the Rajputs of the river valley of the western plains, many of them hardly or not at all to be distinguished from Jats and belonging for the most part to the Bhatties of Jaisalmer and Bikaner. The third group comprised the Rajputs of the western hills including the salt-range tract, comprising both dominant tribes of proud position such as the Janjua and Mongrel Rajputs from Jammu hills and descendants either of the Yadu Bansi (Bhatti) dynasties of Kashmir and the mythical Raja Rasalu of Sialkot, so famous in the Punjab folk-lore, or of a group of tribes apparently of Panwar origin. Finally we had the Rajputs of the Kangra hills of whom the Katoch may be taken as the type so ancient that their origin and advent to their present abodes are lost in the past.

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1. Refer to Allen Godbey's Punjab Castes, p. 132.

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Arians,[1] the Malis[2] were not inferior to the Jats in laboriousness and sobriety; but they did not possess enterprising spirit and resolution. They were scattered all over the Punjab. **Arians, Malis**

Next to Jats and Rajputs, the Brahmins, and Kshatryas like Aroras were the most important cultivators. Although a sprinkling of each of the class was found in all the districts, yet the strongholds of Khatries were Gujranwala, and Deepalpur Tehsil in Montgomery. All these classes were known for their intelligence, enterprise and frugality—sometimes bordering on miserliness. Khatries were endowed with regular features, straight Aryan nose and light complexion. They claimed to be pure Aryans. Traditional Kshatryas, love for adventure and military prowess ceased to be dominant trait of their character in the period of our study. Most of them had resorted to business while quite a considerable number adopted plough as their profession. Brahmins also claimed the true Aryan origin. They still constituted the priestly class of the Hindus, but their position had been brought down by political and social changes. Voices of protest began to be raised against the social tyranny of the Pandits. Not a few of them had adopted agriculture or business as their profession. In all cities, towns and villages, there were the dark and somewhat negroid descendants of the aboriginals who were considered as scheduled castes and forced to do the dirtiest work and then condemned as untouchables. **Kshatryas, Brahmins**

In addition to all these were nomadic tribes such as Bazigars, Sikligars, and Gypsies wandering across the plains of the Punjab with their baggage, donkey caravans and their hunting dogs. **Bazigars, Sikligars, Gypsies**

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1. Arians are Muslims to a man. They claim to be immigrants from Uch and have some affinities with the Kambohs.
2. The term Mali, Mala-Kava maker of garlands of the Purana, is applied to a large class of petty cultivators and gardeners. Strictly speaking, the term is confined to the Hindus, a Muhammedan gardener being known as Kunjra in S.E. district or more commonly only, Arain or Baghban.....

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Chapter II

RELIGIO-SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE PANJAB

MUSLIM RELIGION AND MUSLIM SOCIETY

Sunnies

The majority of the Muslims in the Punjab were the Sunnies. They were patronised by the state during the Sultanate period of history. The Qazis, Muftis and the Ulemas were the exponents of their faith. The ultimate authority in their religious life was the Qu'ran. Besides this, the Sunna, the sayings of the prophet also served as the principal source. The books embodying interpretation of Quran (Tafsir) were also regarded by the sunnies as the object of esteem. Collections of Hadis, prepared by al-Bukhari and Zama Khshari's celebrated commentary on the Quran, called the Kashshaf were very popular in the Panjab as also in India. Al-Ashri's (A.D. 873-93) book 'Maqalat' was also considered to be a good guide so far as Sunni's ideas and institutions were concerned.

As a rule, a sunni ought to have faith only in the oneness of God who is all-powerful, just, majestic, inscrutible, righteous and merciful and show no regard to idol worship, observe five daily prayers (Salat), keep the daily fast during the month of Ramzan, go on pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) and give charity to his Muslim brethren (Zakat). A mere external observance of these things was sufficient to be regarded as pious Muslims.

Shias

Next to the sunnies, the most important sect of the Muslims in the Punjab, as elsewhere in Muslim world, was that of the Shias. The distinction between the Shias and the Sunnies had its roots in the dispute between the Alids and the Umayyads in the year which followed the Khalafatt Uthman's assassination (35 A.H.). In its origin, it has nothing to do with the religion founded by Muhammad, but rather is occupied with the political question of the succession to the leadership of the Muslim community.[1] At first the Alids on their side claimed that they were the legitimate Khalifas because they descended from the prophet's daughter Fatima and his cousin and intimate companion, Ali. The Ummayads, on their part, claimed a nomination by the choice of the Muslims themselves and as a further title claimed worship with the prophet as being of the Hashmite family. Later, the Alids stood for the claims of the descent against all claims of right to office because of the popular

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1. James Hastings: *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, p. 117.

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choice. Besides this, among the sunnies, the Khalifa is a political ruler essentially, while the Alid party regards the prophets' successor as a religious guide and therefore preferred to designate him as the Imam of the Muslim community.[1] It was assumed that his physical descent from the prophet secured to him not merely divine right but also a divine endowment of grace and wisdom. No such assumption was held by the sunnies with regard to the Khalifas. They recognised twelve Imams in line from Fatima and Ali. The last Imam Mohammed Ali Mahdi was believed to have disappeared from the world in A.D. 880 and was expected that he would re-appear to restore justice and righteousness. The Shias recognised the authority of Quran and prophet-hood of Muhammad but had no faith in first three Khalifas. The death of Husain as a martyr gave the Shia not only a passionate motive but also the doctrine that his death had paved the way to paradise.[2] The importance attached by them to the Taziyan was ultimately connected to this belief and overshadows almost every other religious observance of the Shia.[3] The Shias in the period under study were looked upon with disfavour by the sunnies and their religious representatives ulemas.

Ismailies

Ismailies and Qarmathians were the other Muslim sects in the Panjab. The Ismailies reposed faith in seven prophets ending with Jafar-us-Sadiq and Ismail. They claimed to derive their teachings from a hidden source which must receive absolute obedience.[4] The laws of the shariat according to Ismaili belief were not meant for those who possessed esoteric knowledge.[5] Quran itself had inner meanings.

Qarmathians

Qarmathians[6] believed in Muhammud Ibn. Ismail as the last Imam who was expected to re-appear on the last day.

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
2. Grewal, J.S., *Guru Nanak in History*, p. 68.
3. Apart from the difference, noted above there were other differences also : (i) The sunnies do not accord Ali and his sons the degree of veneration which the first of Muharram implies. (ii) There is some confusion of the orthodox feast of the Ashura, which falls on the tenth day of the month. (iii) The mode of purification before the Salat with the sunnies includes the washing of the arms upwards to the elbow, while with the Shias the process is reversed. In the washing of the feet the Sunni ritual literally washes, the Shina merely rutes or wipes the feet (iv) Shia law allows Muta marriages. There temporary unions for a price agreed upon and under conditions of legal contract are forbidden by the sunnies code.
4. S.G.F. Braudorn : Dictionary of Comparative Religion.
5. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 68.
6. Qarmathians are considered to be a sect of Ismailies (Dictionary of Comparative Religion).

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They denied all divine attributes holding that the divine essence has given forth light by which various forms of intelligence and matter have been created, beings having no real individuality. The divine essence which was alone in the beginning, will be alone in the end. The initiates were taught to use speculative philosophical reasoning, as a result of which doubts were raised about the systems of religions including Islam.

Shias, Ismailis and Qarmathians were generally disliked and occasionally persecuted by the Sunnies.

Sufis

However, the most important form of the religious life of the Muslims was embedded in beliefs and practices of the Sufis, the mystics of Islam. The fact that in the works of Minhaj-us-Saraj Ziauddin Barni and Shams-i-Siraj Afif, there are references to MASHAIKH, clearly indicates the increasing importance of the sufis and also the change in the religious life of the Indo-Muslims. Already before the mid-sixteenth century, the influence of the sufis had penetrated nearly all the layers of Muslim society. The low-caste Hindus, the craftsmen and others who had embraced Islam at the instance of the sufis naturally looked upon them as their *pirs*. And the cult of Pir was becoming increasingly popular.[1] The Sultan and the nobles, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were anxious to associate themselves with the sufis. Sikandar's visits to Sheikh Samauddin, Sheikh Neamatullah, Sheikh Husain, Sheikh Jamaili are eloquent for his general regard for the Mashaikhs. No wonder, the sufi influence in the Panjab during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century was considerable. There were many important centres of sufi learning and activities of the Suharawardy order of the sufi. Baha-ud-din Zakariya was the first to establish this centre. Sheikh Yusaf in the beginning of the Lodi period and his grandson Sheikh Baha-ud-din Qureshi at the end were at the helm of the affairs of the centre.[2] Of the various sajjadatts (centres) in the countryside, the most important was the Sajjdah of Ajodhan (Pak-Pattan), the seat of Sheikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakkar who was by far the most popular Sheikh of the Panjab. In the early sixteenth century, Sheikh Ibrahim was on the Sajjdah of Farid.[3] He was very popular among people and out of veneration was called Farid-i-Ganj or the second Farid. At Lahore of Lodi period, Musa Ahangar was a popular Sheikh while Abu Ishaq Qaderi and Ishaq were on their way to rise into prominence.[4] In

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1. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History. Also refer to Ashraf's book Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan.
2. Tarikh-i-Multan, pp. 62-4, 64-67.
3. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 76.
4. Tarikh-i-Lahore, pp. 164-66.
   Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 76

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fact, all the towns had a Sheikh of minor or major importance.

Thanesar, Hansi, Narnaul and Panipat were other important centres of sufi activities, particularly of Chisti order. Panipat apart from serving as the venue both for the Chisti activities and Qalander Sufis. Sharafuddin bin Ali Qalander, to all probability, maintained the Khanqah at the place.

Sources of Inspiration of the Sufis

These sufis derived their inspiration from different sources. The first source was the Quran "The sufis adopting the shia principles of allegorical interpretation (ta-wil) were able to prove to their own satisfaction that every verse and word of the sacred text hides treasures of meaning which God reveals to the elect. So much being granted, one can imagine that it was easy to show Quranic authority for any mystical doctrine whatsoever and to maintain that Sufism was really the esoteric teaching of prophet communicated by him to his son-in-law. No wonder, various quotations from the Quran had served the basis of mysticism of the sufis.

The next important or perhaps the more important source was the mystical experience itself. It is also possible that non-Islamic ideas might have influenced them. Apart from the influence of Christianity, Neo-Platonism, and Buddhism, at least in the initial stages,[1] the contemporary jogis and sidds also affected the course of sufism. References to contact or contest with the jogis in particular confirm this impression.[2] According to Shaikh Muhammad Ghauri, the jogis related the truth of gnosis only in different language from that of the sufis.[3] Similarly Muhammad Ghauri sees many parallels between yoga and sufi theosophy.[4]

Admittedly, there were many contacts with beliefs in the other religions and some exponents seem to have over-stepped Islamic limits *e.g.* Abu Yazid of Bistam[5] and Hallaj. Yet sufism was essentially related to Quran and Muhammad[6].

The developed sufi doctrine distinguishes between what is called station (maqam) and state (hal), the former represent the sufis' efforts on the path, the latter being divine gifts. The chief stations have been detailed as repentance, poverty, patience, trust in God and satisfaction. The states have been called meditation, nearness to God, love, fear, hope, longing, intimacy, tranquility, contemplation and certainty. A Sheikh

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1. James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II, p. 11.
2. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 102.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
4. Siyar-ul-Auliya, p. 444.
5. Yazid ejaculated 'glory to me'. How great is of majesty : Hallaj was crucified in A.D. 922 for his statement 'I am the truth'. The judges took to be a claim to divinity although he did not mean that. (Dictionary of Comparative Religion, p. 593).
6. *Ibid.*, p. 593.

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(Murshid) who must be obeyed is necessary for one starting on the path. The sufi seeks union with God and this is attained in ecstasy. The words Fana (passing away) and baqqi (remaining) indicate the necessary preparation and goal. By 'fana' one passes from passions and desires and finally reaches cessation of conscious thought; by 'baqa' one has arrived at the stage of unity where one is conscious of continuous survival in unity with God.[1] There had been pantheistic tendencies within Sufism, but the normal sufi was faithful to his Islamic theology, howsoever difficult it might be to reconcile the idea of union with Islamic doctrine of God who is altogether different from his creation.

Aziz Ahmeds' Views

According to Aziz Ahmed "Because of the challenge and risk of disintegration into Hindu mysticism, sufism took special care to resolve its differences with orthodoxy in Islamic religious history, the tension between the religious assertion of the transcendance of God and mystical aspirations of His immanence was, perhaps nowhere more thoroughly resolved to a middle of the road than in India where Islam was propagated mainly by the Sufis with the firm emphasis on the observance of the tenets of the Sharia".[2] It is true that the practice of Hajj was not given much importance by Chisti Sufis and the practice of same was never discarded despite the opposition of the ulemas; yet the general tendency of sufism in the Panjab was orthodoxy. According to Abu Said Abul Khair, Sufis were not intolerant "Every particle of the universe shows the way to God but no way to Him is shorter than the one through human heart." According to Shaikh Nizam-ud-din the gist of the sufi ethics is "Do not do unto others, what you would not do to yourself. Wish for others only what you wish for yourself."[3] The treatment of Indo-Muslim Shaikhs towards the non-muslims was generally marked by tolerance. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Chisti disapproves of cruelty in exacting the Jazia. The Chisti Shaikhs were soldom reluctant to come into contact with Hindus or enter into discussion with them on religious matters.[4]

However, there were some sufis, pirs or Shaikhs who were ignorant, incompetent or even foolish. "The one who could not himself swim, how could he teach others to swim? Where the blind lead the blind, they all fall into the ditch".[5] Such sufis were certainly harmful for the religion or society.

MUSLIM SOCIETY

The Muslim society, as it existed during the period under

1. *Ibid.*, p. 593.
2. Aziz Ahmed : *Studies in Islamic Culture*, 131.
3. As quoted by J.S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p. 103.
4. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 101.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

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review, consisted of the immigrants from beyond the North-Western Border of the Punjab, the native Muslims meaning thereby, the Hindu converts and their sons and daughters. The Muslim society as a social phenomenon was relatively new. It was only since Mohammad Ghori that crescentendom began to make headway in the Panjab as also in the rest of India. Its success became pronounced and marked during the three centuries of the rule of Ilbari, Khaljies, Tughlaqs, Sayyad and Afghan rulers. During all these years, some Muslim traders, soldiers, scholars and men of letters, etc. had been adopting the Panjab as their home and taking wives, concubines or female slaves from amongst the Indian people. As a result, they had come to think of themselves as 'Indian Muslims'. In the early sixteenth century, the Mughals migrated to the Panjab and other parts of India. They also, in due coure of time, became Indianised. Even then, the number of immigrants was far less than those of the Indian Muslims.

MUSLIM SOCIAL GROUPS

As time rolled by, the Muslim society divided itself into classes, of course contrary to the theory of oft-held belief that an Islamic society was based on the idea of social equality. The classes were (i) the nobles, (ii) the clergy, (iii) the peasantry and others and, (iv) the slave.

Nobility

The upper class consisted of nobles the exact number of whom is difficult to mention. In point of composition, they were a heterogenous body composed of all sorts of foreigners and Indians. In the beginning of the Muslim rule, almost all the nobles were of Turkish extraction. The Afghans came to be incorporated gradually at a later date. Feroz-Tughlaq was the first monarch who extended his favours to the Afghans, though the latter were accredited on a large scale during the Lodi reign. The Mughal invasions introduced a small element of Mughals who accepted Islam and were given the appellation of 'Non-Muslims' or new converts to Islam. Ala-ud-din Khilji massacred them wholesale at the rebellion of some of them. Indian converts to Islam also enjoyed the rank of a noble and from the times of Altumish they were a force to be reckoned with.

Contradictions

The nobility as a group had developed contradictions. Undoubtedly, they were the greatest if not the only prop, of the state and their solidarity contributed a lot to the establishment of the Sultanate, yet they developed cracks in their body-social. To begin with, the Turkish nobles consolidated themselves into an exclusive ruling class, but with the lapse of time, the converted Muslim population also began to demand their share in political, social and economic privileges. The Turkish aristocracy, being jealous guardian of their power and privileges showed reluctance, and as consequence of it, the Indian Muslims began to struggle for their place in ruling aristocracy and in the administration of the country. Undoubtedly, the Indian

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Muslims succeeded in getting their due but not without upbraiding the foreign Muslim aristocracy that always indulged in conspiracies to bring their rivals down with the result that the administrative efficiency suffered considerably.

During the Lodi Rule, with pushing up of Pathan nobles to occupy the highest positions both in political and social spheres, the Turkish nobles received a further set-back in respect of their power. This thing added new dimension to the already bypolar conflict between the Turkish nobles and Indian Muslim nobles and in this way, the conflict became triangular with the result that each party indulged in acrimony, mud-slinging and intrigues to bring ruin of his opponents.

In the light of the aforesaid facts, it can safely be surmised that the nobility suffered from social and racial contradictions. During the sultanate, it was a challenge to Muslim acuman to synthesise the different interests, but no satisfactory response came forth.

Besides this, the nobles lived a life of ostentation. The morals of the age permitted them indulgence not only in wine and women but also in sodomy with male sweet hearts.[1] Those who could not afford the luxuries of their class could find consolation in the association of public dancing girls and prostitutes for the brothal was almost a recognised institution.[2]

Besides this, the nobility had undergone a considerable decline in respect of personal conduct and character. Not a few of them were corrupt, greedy, selfish, self-seekers and unreliable.

Clergy or Religious Classes

Religious classes formed the second important social group of the Muslims. This group was composed of a number of important groups, the theologians, the Sayyids, and ulemas etc. Of these, the most important were the theologian officers in the kingdom. They were collectively known as Dastar Band —turban wearers. The Sayyids were recognised by their distinctive head dress of Kulah and known as 'Kula Daran' or cap wearers. Both of them followed the sunni form of Islam and Hanafite school of Muslim law.

The special favourites and associates of Sultanate were the ulemas or the state theologians.[3] As a rule, they were well-versed in Muslim Law, Logic, Arabic letters and religious literature of Islam in general, namely *Tafsir*, *Hadis*, *Kalam*

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1. K.M. Ashraf, Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 321.
2. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 38.
3. Ashraf, K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 67.

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etc.[1] They were held in high esteem by the people and were regarded as the successors of the prophet.

This being so, under the special conditions of development of Muslim society in Hindustan, it was but natural to expect that the ulema would acquire an undue prominence.[2] They monopolised practically all judicial, ecclesiastical and educational services. No Sultan, except Ala-ud-din Khilji in a limited sense and Mohammad Bin Tughlaq in his initial stages had been able to be independent of them. Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji compelled them to confine their activities within the prescribed limits which were to decide on judicial cases and to arbitrate on the religious matters.[3] Mohammad Tughlaq went a step further and in secularising the state, he put the ulema on the same footing as other employees of the state and treated them accordingly.[4]

During Feroz Tughlaq, the ulemas' influence again grew and they had re-assured the earlier position and influence when the invasion of Taimur took place. The Afghans, on the assumption of power, treated the ulemas with marked respect. Certain scholars aver[5] that the Afghan rulers did not admit them to any effective voice in administration but the fact that they had religious influence and the Afghan rulers wanted to make use of it shows that administration could not but take serious view of their opinion. No doubt, the ulemas rendered a great help to the Sultans, particularly in the initial phases of the Muslim conquest through interpretation of Quran and other sayings of the Prophet to justify various acts of the Sultans from religious angle, yet since their approach, by and large, was primarily religious, their advice very often, was confined to safeguard the interests of the Muslims, alone. So far as their personal character and conduct was concerned, it certainly underwent degeneration. Sultan Balban complained the want of wisdom and courage among the ulemas as a whole.

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1. Although the Quran emphasizes their position in a general way as a separate class of Muslims people to the path of goodness, no special provision was made for them in the Holy Book. Spurious traditions soon began to be spread among the people. The Prophet was repeated to have said : Honour the ulema, for they are the successors of the prophets : he who honours them, honours the prophet of Islam and Allah thereby. (Ashraf, Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 68).
2. K.M. Ashraf, Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 70.
3. *Ibid.* p. 68.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 69 ; Consult Kitab-ur-Rahla of Ibn Batuta, Vol. II, p. 54; The Theologions of Sind were charged with misappropriation of state funds and were severely punished.
5. K.M. Ashraf, Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 69.

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Bughra Khan warned his son against trusting these later-day ulemas and asked him to keep away from these theologions whom he described as greedy. Mohammad Bin Tughlaq held similar view. Amir Khusrau finds that the only distinguishing feature of the theologions as a class was their hypocrisy, vanity and conceit. He declares that the respect paid to the ulema was purely through force of concensus and that if virtue were to decide the measure of social honour, the laity was a thousand times better than the priesthood[1].

Third Social Group

The peasantry, minor officials, the artisans, the shop-keepers, the clerks and the petty traders constituted the third social group of the Muslims. Though not equal in status with the upper class, yet they were not a despised section of the society. Undoubtedly they were not as rich and opulent and could ill-afford to hold jashan or to own a mansion, dancing girls and concubines, and slaves etc. yet they lived a reasonable standard. Being the members of the ruling community they enjoyed a better life as compared with their Hindu neighbours.

Lowest rung Slaves etc.

At the lowest rung of the society were slaves, both males and females. The Muslim society in the Punjab, as elsewhere in the world was marked by the existence of slavery as its integral part. They were employed in household works and various royal karkhanas. Female slaves were also kept. They were of two types: those employed for domestic and menial work and others who were bought for company and pleasure. The former were subjected to all sorts of indignities, while the latter had a more honourable position—sometimes even a dominating position in the household. This number of slaves was quite large during the Sultanate period. Ala-ud-din had fifty thousands of slaves[2] while Feroze Tughlaq maintained 180000.[3] The slaves kept by the nobles were over and above the afore-quoted figures. The institution proved to be useful for the Sultans in two ways: firstly, it became instrumental in converting the non-Muslims and secondly the slaves constituted a loyal body ever-ready to further the cause of the Sultans. Theoretically speaking, since a slave was usually a convert to Islam, he possessed the same rights as any other member of Muslim society; but in actual practice the position was quite different. "He was usually a prisoner of war, and according to the military usage of the age, his life was at the mercy of his captor who had full power of killing him or

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1. Matla-ul-Anwar of Amir Khusrau Lucknow 1884, K.M. Ashraf, op. cit., p. 71.
2. Tripathi R.P., Some Aspects of Muslim Administration, 1936, p. 220.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

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otherwise disposing of him."[1] In fact, the slave was considered as property of a conqueror to be given away as gift or to be sold in the market. But no shrewd captor or buyer however, neglected to take good care of his property, which, given proper attention, could be converted into ready money.[2] As a matter of fact, on the whole, a human relationship existed between the slave and the master. This was the reason (other being political instability) that slaves rose to such social eminence as were not ordinarily within the reach of the highest and the noblest in the kingdom. A slave in the service of Sultan was usually manumitted after some time, and was provided an honourable position, even with rank and an elevated status.[3]

Evil Effects of the Institution of Slavery

This institution since the times of Feroze Tughlaq threw up certain problems what warranted its re-appraisal. The number of the slaves had swelled to an alarming extent and the opportunities for their proper employment had lagged behind. Moreover, the social consequences were not very happy. Muslim nobles engrossed themselves in the affairs pertaining to war (Razm) and pleasures (Bazm) and paid no heed to the domestic work with the result that in due course of time, their code of social behaviour began to view domestic work as unworthy of a gentleman's dignity and honour. Furthermore, long tradition of slavery prevented the development of the sense of human dignity which lies at the foundation of morals. Besides this, its effect in the manner and outlook of the ruling class was also bad. The ruling classes, as having learned to command over their slaves got used to highly undemocratic ways of life which were obviously prejudicial to the social well-being of a society. Various examples of treatment meted out to the slaves that we come across in the annals of the Sultans were very likely the outcome of this behaviour.

Be that it may all this gives to a slave-holding society the stamp of unprogressiveness and a socially unhealthy character. The social consequences, though not so pronounced, are fairly well-marked in the social development of medieval Indian society.[4]

Other Groups

In addition to the horizontal stratification of society into the aforesaid groups, the Muslim society was divided into sectarian divisions. The most important among them were

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1. Ashraf, K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 76.
2. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 37.
3. Afif., Tarikh-i-Feroz Shahi, p. 444. (As quoted by K.M. Ashraf in the Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan).
4. Ashraf K.M., Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan, p. 77.

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Sunnies, Shias, Ismailis, Muhlids, Batinis, Ibahati or Mahdavis. Undertones of moral indignation or even open condemnation, may be easily discerned in the Sunni writers, speaking of the minority sects during the Sultanate period.[1]

Not only this, the Muslim society was criss-crossed by other social groups, the Gakkhars, the Pathans, the Baluchs, the Junds and Janjhuas. Jats had embraced Islam, yet the religion could affect them only skin-deep. So far as their habits and social attitudes were concerned, they were more committed to their own social organisations than to the one preached by Islam of that period. Baluchis had their own tribal organization as also the Pathans. Jats were more sensitive to the tribal callings than to their religious conscience.

RELIGION OF THE HINDUS

There was a rich variety of religious beliefs and practices among the Hindus. The authority of the Vedas was recognized by the priests of nearly all the Hindu sects and it was invoked in support of many a socio-religious custom. Though the position of the Vedas as 'revealed knowledge was unique', Puranas appear to have enjoyed greater popularity throughout the medieval period. The six schools of philosophy remained in currency, but the Vedanta was gradually coming to the fore.[2]

Major sects: Shaivism

The major sects of the Hindus were : Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism; of these, the most important was Shaivism. The main reason for its popularity was its monastic orders. According to Sujan Rai, the categories of Sannyasies were quite numerous; all of them were extremely ascetical in their practices, underwent hard penances and shunned the pleasures of the senses.[3] They could be distinguished by the tilak-mark on their foreheads. Some of the sannyasies carried a tiger's or panther's skin on their shoulders. Almost all of them used ash for the tilak mark which generally consisted of three horizontal lines representing the trident of Shiva or his third eye. Some used only two horizontal lines with a dot, considered to be a representation of the phallic emblem of Shiva. The wearing of Tilak mark was regarded as important ritual.

Jogis

Closely connected with the sannyasies but distinct from them were the Jogis with their principal orders : Aghro panthies and Nath panthies. Nath Panthies were the followers of Gorakh Nath. Only those who went through the last stage of initiation

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1. Grewal, J.S., Guru Nanak in History, p. 35.
2. Thapar Romila. A History of India 162-3 as quoted by J.S. Grewal in 'Guru Nanak in History'.
3. Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, p. 22.

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were called Kanpatas. The last stage of initiation consisted in having the ear-lobes pierced with the bhairvi knife and large rings worn by the jogi. These rings were generally called mudri.[1]

The movement initiated by Gorakh Nath in the Punjab had its origins in the concept of Yoga as the means of attaining liberation or rebirth to a non-conditional mode of being, through effectual techniques. In the Yog-tattva upanishad four kinds of Yoga are distinguished : mantra, lāya, hatha and rāja. It was the hatha-yoga that was appropriated by the Gorakh Nathies and transformed into a movement of considerable importance in the twelfth century. By the fifteenth century, this movement having touched its apex had started its decline.

In Nath Yoga, great importance was attached to preliminary purification which as the texts repeatedly emphasize, were of great value for the yogis' health : *dhauti*, basti, neti, nauli, trataka, and kapala bhati. Nothing could be obtained without abhayasa (practice), and pranayama was absolutely essential for purifying the nadis, the most important of these nadis being ida,pingala and sasumra. Around them was built an elaborate and a complex system of homologies. It was believed that the pranayama destroyed all sins and conferred siddis on the adept. Immortality of a perfect body (Sidha-deha) led to immortality in a divine body (divya-deha) and the attainment of perfection (Siddi) meant jivan-mukti (liberation in life). The Supreme state was the state of Shivahood. This was the inner truth of the cult of Nathism. Thus it was not simply the adoption of Hathyogic practices but also then assumilation to a particular theological system that distinguished the order of the jogis from some other sects. Jogis regarded women 'as tigress of night' although in theory, all the Gorakh Panthis could marry. However, they did not recognise caste system. They did not believe in undertaking pilgrimage of sacred places. They adopted the language of the people (Panjabi) to address themselves to the uneducated. They regarded the world as real and not illusory. Judged in this context Yoga represented a reaction against metaphysical speculation and the excesses of a fossilized ritualism.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century Guru Nanak emerged on the scene.

Degradation of Yogis

Yogis had gone hypocrites. They cared more for the growth of the plaits of hair and rubbing ashe on their forehead and less for inner purity. Surrounded by the cries of their bastard children, they called themselves moralists and cried

1. Dr. J.S. Grewal : Guru Nanak in History, p. 110.

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aloud 'Gorakh Nath'. Guru Nanak in Var Ram Kali utters :

ਜੋਗੀ ਗਿਰਹੀ ਜਟਾ ਬਿਭੂਤ
ਆਗੈ ਪਾਡੈ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪੂਤਿ
ਜੋਗਨਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਜੁਗਤ ਗਵਾਈ
ਨਿਤੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਸਿਰ ਛਾਈ ਪਾਈ
ਨਾਨਕ ਕਲਿ ਕਾ ਇਹ ਪਰਵਾਣ
ਆਪੇ ਆਖਣ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣ

As a matter of fact all these so-called religious leaders performed their twi-light devotions, argued and sat like cranes, and uttered falsehood.

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism upto the period of our study had fallen from its heights. In fact it had degenerated considerably on the eve of the advent of Guru Nanak. In the Punjab, its deeper meanings and true import was not followed equally by the masses and the Vaishnav priests. The Vaishnavites were satisfied with the worship of Vishnu and his various incarnations, visit punctually and regularly temples raised to house the icons of the diety and of reading or listening to the Vaishnavite texts. In addition to these they were required to abstain from meat and liquor. The Bairagis and sannyasies who were committed to the spread of Vaishnavism paid scant respect to their duties and freely indulged in malpractices and loose morals. They coloured their clothes as a mark of their order and wore a surplice of worn-out cloth as a mark of their having joined sannyasi order and taken pledge to kindle spiritual flame in the people, yet they did nothing of this sort and exploited the people ruthlessly.

Shaktism

Shaktism was another cult which was very popular in the Punjab during our period. Various temples raised in honour of the Goddess as also to house her icons bear testimony to it. Theoretically, Goddess in her various forms and manifestations was among other things, a token of primacy given to Shakti, the active principle or the cosmic force which sustains the universe and various forms of gods, but in actual practice people considered him the object of worship and aspired for their identification with her. The votaries of this cult believed in offering animal sacrifices to propitiate her. Except this, the general usages of Shaivism were observed.

Left handers

But as the time rolled by, the left handers emerged as a branch of Shaktism. They, under the influence of Tantrism developed their own philosophy and their own rituals. Their supreme ideal was identification of the individual soul with the supreme soul. Their worship was characterised by 'Initiation' irrespective of caste or sex, and by mantras, yantras

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and black rites. It was based on a code of esoteric practices in which sexual representations were much in evidence. In fact, they regarded human body the most reliable and effective instrument of salvation on the assumption that the macrocasm was reflected in the microcasm.

The worship of Vahmacharis or Tantrists is not a simple affair, it pre-supposes a long and difficult sadhana. The dharanis and mantras were raised to the dignity of a vehicle of salvation and one was supposed to mutter the prescribed mantras even while conducting the ordinary daily business. The mantra, drawn on a piece of cloth was conceived as a miniature temple, the Sriyantra, the finest of the *serves*, has four openings flights of steps, and a sanctuary where the chosen divinity dwells. At the same time, the disposition of triangle, in the yantra represented the male and female sexual organs, the instruments of the unio-mystica. The penances and austerities (tapas) and recitation of mantras (japas) were to precede the use of the mandala as well as the yantra. The mandala was meant to be an image of the universe and drawn on a cloth, it was believed to support meditation and to serve as a defence against temptations and distractions. The liturgy was expected to discover mandala in the human body.

Debauchery

The male partner in the rite of maithuna (the bhairo of the vamcharis) was to look upon the nude female partner (the bhairvi) as prakarti incarnate with adoration and detachment. At a second stage, the Bhairvi was transformed into an incarnation of Shakti and the goodness herself. The Supreme goal of rite was a complete identification with Shakti and Shiva through the realisation of 'immobility' on all three planes of thought, respiration and seminal emission : Matsya—fish, mansa—flesh, maithuna—coition, madya—wine became extremely important to the vamcharis. This ritual indulgence in meat, wine and sexual intercourse was little short of debauchery and the religion could not fulfil any social purpose.

Religion of the masses

The religion of the masses was quite different from that held by the cultured classes of the Hindus. They believed in godbeings of nature, of disease, spirits, animal worship, totems and fetishes. According to J.S. Grewal "not unoften primitive forms of animism and fetishism are found in combination with the rites and observances of 'higher' Hinduism. The objects of popular worship make a long list, sun, moon, stars, earthquakes, sucks, rivers, trees, Ganesh, the sainted dead, evil spirits and many more.

From the above account it is not difficult to surmise that Hindu religion including its important sects had lost its vituality and its votaries had confined themselves to performing

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empty rituals and recitations from sacred scriptures without understanding their meaning and significance. Not only this, some of its votaries as for instance, tantrists or vamcharis had been bold enough to incorporate even dehauchery in their religion. The religious leadership was beraft of any higher motive; they only aimed at their own comfort and had acquired expertise to exploit the innocent people.

Bhai Gurdas says "Everybody thought he possessed knowledge but none knew in what knowledge or ignorance consisted. Men did what pleased themselves. Alchemy and thamaturgy were professed incantatious and spells practised and men indulged in strife, wealth and mutual jealousies."

HINDU MUSLIM RELATION

Alberuni's Account

In the initial stages of the Muslim rule in the Punjab, the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims were not good. The Hindus had no love lost for the Muslims, Alberuni notes[1]. All their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners. They call them Malechha i.e. impure and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them because thereby they think, they would be polluted. They consider as impure anything which touches the fire and water of a foreigner; and no household can exist without these two things which once has been polluted should be purified and thus recovered, as under ordinary circumstances if anybody or anything has become unclean, he or it would strive to regain the state of purity. They were not allowed to receive any body, who does not belong to them even if he wished it, or was inclined to their religion. Alberuni gives reasons for this attitude. The Hindus are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid.[2] They are complacent and believe that there is no other country on earth but theirs, and no created beings besides them name any knowledge or whatsoever.[3] Their language is different from ours.[4] They differ from us in their manners.[5] But there was yet another, rather the most important reason. The Muslim conquerors during the course of their conquests and even after their consolidation meted out to the Hindus the treatment which could never arouse affection. According to Imam Shiafa and Abu Hanifah, and Imam Ahmed Hanbal Hindus being no

1. Alberani's India by Schan, pp. 19-20.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
3. *Op. cit.*, p. 23.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

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possessor of revealed book (Ahl-i-Kitab) were kafirs and could choose either death or Islam. But as the number of the Muslim was very small and there was danger of the combination of all the Hindus against the Muslim Rule, the legal position of the Hindus was changed by the Muslim jurists and they were given the status of Zimmies, meaning thereby that they would pay Jaziya.

Nizami's views

According to Nizami, this position of the Hindus was accepted by all the Sultans of Delhi. Once or twice during this period, some religious fanatics demanded a change in the legal status of the Hindus, but their approach was neither approved by the rulers nor did it receive the support of the Muslim public. Such demands remained whiness of impotent fanaticism and were never seriously considered. In his fervour to justify good relation between the Hindus and the Muslims the learned scholar says,[1] "In all probability, 'Jaziya' was not realised as a distinct tax payable by individual non-Muslims but was merged in the Kharaj and was treated as part of the total incidence of taxation."

Rigours of the Muslim Rule softened

The position of the Hindus was not as good as Professor Nizami in the foregoing paragraph would have us believe. Certainly Jaziya was imposed on the Hindus to signify that they were inferior to the Muslims and in no case Jaziya could be treated as part of Kharaj (Land tax). But undoubtedly with the passage of time, the rigours of the Muslim rule vis-a-vis the Hindus diminished and cultural relations began to develop. Relations between Hindu and Muslim traders and working classes began to be dictated by trade morality and guild spirit which transcended all other considerations of religion and caste.

The Multani traders were mostly Hindus. There had frequent dealings with the Muslims, including the Turkish nobles. The fact that a large number of the Hindus were converted to Islam also blunted the sharp edge of the Muslim fanaticism because they had better understanding of the attitudes of the Hindus and secondly they themselves did observe many a custom of their erstwhile brethren. Moreover, both the Hindus and the Muslims shared the danger of being destroyed at the hands of the Mughals. This common danger further accelerated the pace of syncretic forces. Besides this, the Sufi Saints played a considerable role in reducing bitterness between these two communities. Their affectionate behaviour towards every human being went a long way to soften the people in the treatment towards one another. According to Nizami the earliest references of the contacts

1. Nizami Khaliq Ahmed : Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th century, p. 319.

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between the Hindus and the Muslims that we find in the medieval records are about the Khanqahs of the Muslim saints.[1] The use of a large number of Hindustani words and idioms, and the assumption of some Hindu names by the Muslim nobles (e.g. Malik Chajju) clearly epitomise the improved relations between both these communities.

The state too had to be lenient towards the Hindus as the time passed on. It could not possibly dispense with the services of the Hindu employees in the various branches of the administration particularly at the local level. The ruling Muslims fully realised that it was not possible for them to destroy all the indigenous institutions of administration and hence the services of the indigenous people were imperative. Dr. Tara Chand writes[2] 'when Qutb-ud-din Aibek decided to stay in Hindustan, he had no other choice but to retain the Hindu staff which was familiar with the Hindu administrations, for without it all Government including the collections of revenue would have fallen into utter chaos'. The Muslims did not bring with them from beyond the Indian frontiers, artisans, accountants and clerks. Their buildings were erected by the Hindus who adopted their ancient rules to newer conditions, their coins were struck by Hindu goldsmiths and their accounts were kept by Hindu officers. Brahmin legists advised the king on administration of Hindu Law and Brahmin astronomers helped in the performance of their general functions.

Still the road was long

Still the road was long and much was to be done to reach the destination. The matrimonial relationship was a rarity. Inter-dining among both the communities was, almost non-existent. The social intercourse was healthier and on a bigger scale in the villages as compared with the urban areas. Except on certain occasions, when there was a cry of Jehad, the stream of life in the rural areas flowed smoothly.

THE PLIGHT OF THE HINDUS

The Sultanate period is marked by the established rule of the Sultans and also of their successful attemps to protect the country from the attacks of the Mughals. In the consummation of both these objects, Punjab acquired a position of political eminence in obtaining the political set-up.

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1. Nizami Khaliq Ahmed : Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th century.
2. Tara Chand : Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, page 137.

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Importance of Punjab in the eyes of Sultans

The reasons are not far to seek. It was here that the Turks first entered and established their rule. It also served as an ideal base for them to escalate war into the rest of the country. Its high productivity and its proximity to Muslim areas beyond the frontiers of India were the additional advantages for the Turk rulers. Even after the consolidation of the Turkish Rule in the country, the importance of the Punjab did not diminish. The repeated invasions of the Moghuls lent new dimensions to its importance. The Sultans built forts, stationed army and took keen interest in the administrative set-up of the land. Their obvious purposes was to meet the Moghul menace but that the Punjab acquired additional importance was a corollary to all this. According to Dr. Fauja Singh 'Whatever politically tangible happened at Delhi, Punjab nobles had their part to play'. It is really important that with only a few exceptions all political revolutions succeeded only with the aid of the Punjab nobles, in one form or the other. But the advantages of all this accrued to the Muslims alone. The Muslims of the Turkish origin in particulars.

Hindus were not given any position of respect

The Indo-Muslims could reap benefits but only in a lesser degree as compared with those enjoyed by the Turkish nobility. But even their lot was not as bad that of the Hindus, who being idol-worshippers were termed Kafirs according to the Muslim polemics and were entitled to nothing except a choice between Islam and death. Compelled by the political and social expediencies the Sultans were wise enough not to follow the orthodox line and awarded the Hindus the status of the Zimmies meaning thereby they could live in the Muslim State by paying Jazia. The arrangement was certainly not an attempt to integrate the Hindus with the Muslims. Jazia entailed not only a financial burden on the Hindus but also served as a constant reminder to them of their inferior position. Some scholars aver that Jazia was taken in lieu of the protection which the Muslim rulers in the Punjab were obliged to extend to the Hindus but the protection was required by the Muslims also. Indeed, Jazia was imposed to spread demoralisation among the Hindus.

The Will of the Hindus was totally crushed

Another thing which crushed the will to assert among the Hindus was the presence of the concourse of Muslim soldiers in the Punjab. The Sultans, to achieve the twin purpose of establishing and strengthening the rule and warding off the danger as posed by the Mughals, were forced to do it; but its effect on the Hindus was harrowing. For them, the presence of the army hung over their head like domocle's sword tied to the tender and feeble thread of moods of different Sultans or other high-ups in the Government. The constant fear of death

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did incalculable harm to the growth of the sound personality of the Hindus.

Conversion

Not only this, the extent of the agony of the Hindus can be easily imagined when they saw the mass-scale conversion of their brethren to Islam, some embracing Muslim religion out of fear or mundame motives but many out of them revolt against the Hindu unprogressive and unjust social structure. The wholesale destruction of the Hindu temples and feebleness of their gods, often held to be invincibles, the failure of their social and political leadership also eroded the Hindu moral fibre.

Denied share in Government

To demoralise them further, they were denied posts in Government departments. Before the establishment of the Turkish rule, they, atleast the people belonging to higher castes could get high posts, but now they were reserved for the Muslims and the feeling of helplessness and despair were natural to haunt the Hindus. Besides this, the occasional pricks which the Government and its officials inflicted on the Hindus went a long way to stifle them. According to Dr. Fauja Singh 'sometimes, a temple was demolished or an icon was broken and its pieces given to a shopkeeper to use them as weights; sometimes, a proud and carefree ruler such as Ala-ud-din Khilji would order that the Hindus were not to wear good clothes or ride horses. Pilgrimage Tax was a clear-cut case of the policy of discrimination which the Muslim rulers followed towards the Hindus. Obviously, the cumulative effect of all those things was that Hindus developed an inferiority complex and feeling of helplessness.'

Hindus turned peevish and hypocritical

The demoralisation of the Hindus could not but have preverted if not corrupted their social attitudes. They became introvert, peevish and escapist.

Unable to be frank and straight forward, they became hypocritical. Afraid of taking cudgels to face the challenge, they sought refuge in fate, superstitions and omens. Whether seed was to be sown or journey was to be taken or even some insignificant work was to be started, resort to omen was necessary. This type of degradation led to the growth of a new class of exploiters consisting of so-called astrologers, Pandits and magicians. The standards of behavioural and social morality went down. Falsehood was the order of the day. The all-round degradation is well portrayed by Guru Nanak in the following verses :—

ਸਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਦੂਰਿ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਕੂੜ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥
ਮਥੈ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇੜਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਖਾਈ

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ਹਥ ਛੁਰੀ ਜਗਤ ਕਸਾਈ
ਨੀਲ ਵਸਤ੍ਰ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ
ਮਲੇਛ ਪਾਨ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਣ
ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਾਣਾ
ਚਉਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾ ਜਾਣਾ

(ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧)

It is true that the degeneration had started since long back and the foreigners were not solely responsible for it, yet there is no doubt that it deepened and became widespread under their rule.

Degradation of Hindu relegious leaders

The religious leaders—Jogies, and Sannyasies etc. could also not escape the effect of the general moral deterioration. Their interest in other worldliness and absurd externalia is clear indication of the working of their mind. Guru Nanak condemns the Jogies 'for having a heart of a cunning man and adopting different means to deceive the people.'[1]

Traditional-Castes of the Hindus

The demoralised Hindus, instead of making adequate changes in the socio-political pattern, clung more tenaciously to the old values and old hackneyed and outmoded pattern of life. They were divided into four traditional castes viz. Brahmins, Kshatryas, Vaish and Sudras; but as a result of Muslim impact, a number of old social and legal functions had passed outside the operation of caste rules. The position and the legal and formal powers of the Brahmins had undergone a considerable change with the fall of the old Kshatryas or the ruling classes of Hindustan. Some of them qualified as physicians and astrologers; quite a few among them turned to agriculture. Similarly Kshatryas or Vaishyas adopted profession other than stipulated by the caste instructions. But the caste spirit was as strong as ever. At best, the Muslim impact affected a change in classes and their relative position but it could not knock out the caste spirit, with the result that the Hindu society was a house divided into four groups, often looking askance at one another. Moreover, in-caste conflicts were also there. Each caste group was divided into sub-groups; not unoften assuming about itself an air of superiority and taking vicarious pleasure while denigerating or condemning the other group.

In-caste quarrels

Hundreds of examples can be gleaned to illustrate this point. Bhardwaj Brahmins disliked Sarswat Brahmans, Manjats hated the Grewal jats and similarly Bania was looked

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1. Gura Granth Sahib, Suhi Mohalla 1.

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down upon by the jats. Beneath the higher Hindu classes came the millions of untouchables. Though the phenomena of the untouchability was not so acute in the north as it was in the south, yet the feeling of the upper class in the north India towards the untouchables was indisputable. The Brahmins and other upper classes, quite submissive to his Muslim neighbours, were tyrannical in their attitudes towards their co-religionists so-called sudras and untouchables.

Plight of the untouchables

These people lived a completely isolated life from the rest of the Hindus. The Hindu priests would not officiate at the house of an untouchable and will not allow him to enter his temple. The Hindu barber did not shave him. The Hindu washerman did not wash his clothes.

In spite of the frantic efforts of the sponsors of the Bhakti movement in the country to bring about social harmony among the Hindus, the status of the sudras had not improved. Even the persons as great as Kabir and Namdev could not escape social discrimination at the hands of the high castes. Namdev, an eminent Bhakta of Maharashtra, was pushed out of the temple on account of his being so-called low-caste.

Different attitudes of different social groups

Apart from the differences born out of caste-spirit, there were other differences also. Different groups of the people reacted differently to different social customs and institutions. Jats practised 'Karewa' and allowed widow re-marriage. The customary law of theirs differed both from the Hindu Law and the ordinary customs. The Aroras, resembled that of the Hindus generally in the south west Punjab and one of its distinguishing features was the 'Sawai', an extra quarter share which went to the eldest son. Widow re-marriage, although forbidden in theory, was generally tolerated. Jats, without any reservation or hestitation, practised Karewas and entertained no taboos regarding widow re-marriage. Moreover, the jats being essentially tribal in their outlook took more care for their tribal ties than those of castes or creed. They arduously nursed, and faithfully observed ancestor worship called the 'Jathera Puja' according to which some important member of the tribe was worshipped by the people of the tribe. Pride of 'Got' (sub-caste) was also one of the distinguishing features of the jats.

In marked contrast to the tribal Jathera the village in south-east Punjab worshipped Bhumia. There, when a new colony or village was founded in the south-east Punjab, the first thing to be done before houses were actually built, was to raise a maund of earth on a spot near the proposed village and plant a jand tree on it. The first man who died in the village whether he be a Brahmin, a Jat, or a Chamar was burnt

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or burried on the maund. The fortunate man was deified as the Bhumia or earth god, and worshipped by Hindus of all classes in the village, being looked upon as its sole guardian diety.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that Hindu society was a house divided in itself, completely demoralized without any social will to improve itself. It appeared as if it had resigned to her fate and felt satisfied in clinging to its beliefs and some of their outworn and outdated institutions such as untouchability and caste system instead of striving to fashion creative response to the challenges of Islamic relegion and Islamic civilization. The natural leaders of the Hindus—Brahmins, Kshatriyas or the leaders of different religious sects—had turned peevish, coward and hypocritical and there was none capable and qualified enough to initiate the process of rejuvenation.

EDUCATION

Unprogressive Educational System

The Muslims, prior to their coming to India, had not developed any system of education; yet they made a fairly good arrangement for education in India. But it did not have any element of progress in the modern sense of term. It, at best, sustained or determined the shape of the political, social economic and cultural institutions, as also it moulded the character and outlook of the people on life. It was so dominated by the theological consideration that secular subjects, practically found no place in curriculum. There was no arrangement for the teaching of the subjects of Indian interest such as Indian History, Sanskrit language, Hindu religion or Indian social organisation. Most of the teachers in different schools were foreigners drawn from Persia, Arabia and other countries of Central Asia. This being so, the Indian Muslims developed an extra-Indian complex which was certainly detrimental to the country as well as to the Muslims.

According to Dr Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, since Feroz Tughlaq was deeply interested in astronomy, history and medicine, it should be presumed that these subjects too were taught in schools. Regarding the method of teaching, we are again faced with the predicament of scanty relevant material. Still, we feel that probably the traditional medieval method of teaching through the prescribed books and making students to commit important works to memory was in vogue. Education was imparted through three types of instructions : (1) Maktabs, (2) Schools attached to mosques and Khanqahs, and (3) Madrassas. The first two types of schools imparted elementary education while Madrassas were the centres of higher learning, flourished only in towns and cities.

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Whatever the educational system there was, the Sultans took deep interest in it. Masud, in carrying out the traditional policy of his father under whom Ghazni had become a great centre of Islamic learning established a school at Lahore which became in course of time a centre of Muslim learning in the 12th century. Abul Faiz Rumi was the glory of Lahore during the Sultan Ibrahim Gaznavi. Mohmud of Ghur established a number of Madrassas. Balban, during the reign of Nasir-ud-din, established Madrassa, named Madrasah-i-Nasiriya. Balban's reign was famous for schools, and poets, and philosophic and learned persons. Under the Khiljies, there was a great educational progress and Ala-ud-din founded a Madrassa at Delhi and near it excavated a tank and named it 'Hauz Khas'. Under Feroz Tughlaq, education made great strides. He built as many as 30 Madrassas in different parts of the kingdom.

After Feroz Tughlaq, it seems as if there had been lull in the educational activity on account of the havoc wrought by the Tamur's invasion. There was, however, revival of learning when Sikandar Lodhi (1489-1517 A.D.) succeeded to the throne. Sultan, himself a poet and literateur, established many Madrassas in all parts of his kingdom.

In the pre-Moghul Punjab, Lahore and Multan were great centres of learning. From the Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Muntakh-ul-Twarikh and Ain-i-Akbari, it is evident that several other towns of the Punjab enjoyed the reputation of being respectable centres of Muslim scholarship. Jullundur, Sultanpur, Ajodhan, Thanesar, Samana, Narnaul, Bhatinda, Sirhind, Sialkot, Kangra were quite famous for educational activities.

Hindu Educational System also did not show any progressive sign

The Hindu education too did not show any progressive sign. In the medieval India, the Hindu Educational institutions were of three types, viz. (i) Pathshalas or elementary schools, (ii) Tols or Colleges, (iii) Private Tutor schools. In elementary schools, reading, writing and arithmetic were taught, besides some kind of elementary religious instruction. The 'tols' or colleges were the highest seats of learning in Sanskrit language. Poetry, Grammar, Astronomy, Rhetoric, Lexicon, and Philosophy were taught. Old Hindu universities of the type of Takhshala etc., had perished on account of the onslaught of the early Muslim invaders and rulers.

In the Punjab no tol or Hindu college operated during the period of our study. Elementary Pathshalas and private schools imparted education to the Hindus. The Hindus of the upper strata sent their children to Muslim Madrassas for higher education.

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LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

During the period of Sultanate beginning from Mahmud and ending with Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultans extended patronage to scholars, writers, poets, philosophers, logicians, historians and jurists. Their patronage might have been the result of their genuine interest in the language and its literature, the desire to create a class of intellectuals having kinship of feeling with them or the intention of diffusing knowledge of Persian among the people so that they might understand and appreciate the Muslim instructions and thought. Among the historians, however, Hasan Nizami, the author of Taj-ul-Muasir, Min Haj-ud-din Siraj, the author of Fatwai-Jahandari, Afif, the author of Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi, Ismi, the author of Fatuh-us-Sultan were the most prominent. Similarly among the poets, Masaud Saad, Salman, Abul Fazal Roomi, Amir Khusro, Amir Hasan, Pandit Tilok and Dungar Mal were outstanding. Indeed, the credit goes to the Sultans for not only popularising but making Persian as the medium for literary expression in the Punjab. In fact, by doing so they did all the required spade work which rendered a great help to the Moghals to make Punjab like the rest of northern India as rich repository of the knowledge of Persian language and literature.

No work worth the name was written in the Punjab in Sanskrit. Ferozshah Tughlaq and Sikandar Lodi, however, got a few Sanskrit works translated into Persian.[1] Farhang-i-Sikandri is the Persian translation of a book of medicine[2] in Sanskrit. Nor did Punjab make progress in respect of Hindi literature. Only Khusro[3] is said to have composed quite a large number of Hindi poems.

But this period is particularly marked by the progress of Punjabi and emergence of Urdu. Malik Muhammad Jaisi prefaced one of his Hindi works with the remarks that Auliya had always adopted the languages of the countries in which they settled; he specifically mentions Hindi and Punjabi.[4] Sheikh Farid wrote Punjabi poetry which is full of poetic qualities for which Sheikh Farid is considered to be the father of the Sufi Poetry traditions. A contemporary of Nanak, Sheikh Ibrahim at Pakpattan, was writing verses in Punjabi. Punjabi

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1. Punjab da Itihas, Punjabi University, Vol. III, p. 347.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Op. cit., p. 342.
   Khusro was born in A.D. 1253 at Tapiala but he spent a substantial portion of his life at Multan.
4. Abdul Haqq Maulvi : The Role of the Sufi in the Early Development of Urdu, Aligarh, pp. 8-9.

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poetry in medieval age reached its zenith with the masterly compositions of Nanak. Nanak set the artistic norms, however, for all who were to follow him in the land.

No specimen of the Punjabi prose pertaining to the period under review is available; but we can presume that it must have been written in the forms it assumed in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali as also in Persian, biographies, travel accounts, expositions, commands and letters.

A common spoken dialect, that emerged as a result of the contact between the foreign Turks and other central Asian Muslims on the one hand and the Hindus on the other during the period of the Sultanate of Delhi or a little earlier became known as Urdu or the language of the camp and the market. But it remained in a fluid condition for nearly 200 years and attained the status of a written language in the first quarter of the century. It was originally called Zaba-i-Hindi and sebsequently Urdu.

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Chapter 3

POLITICO-ECONOMIC SCENE IN THE PUNJAB ON THE EVE OF GURU NANAK'S ADVENT

POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE PUNJAB ON THE EVE OF NANAK'S ADVENT

After Timur, the semblance of Government

After the departure of Timur "all semblance of Government was destroyed in upper India" and the extent to which Punjab suffered during the prevailing disorder may be gauged from the fact that when Mubarak Shah, the second Sayyad monarch, entered Lahore in 1421, he found the city in ruins. The Sayyad Monarch appears to have been a man of ability and vigour but the circumstances were so adverse that he failed to stem the tide of disruption. The Mewaties who held the tract between the Delhi and Agra, the Hindu Zamindars of *Katehar and the Doab*, the Turkbachas of Sirhind kept up the continuous opposition and the situation in Punjab was made hopeless by the constant intrigues of the rich governors, the machinations and adventures of Jasrath Khokar and raids of Shark Ali of Kabul.

With the murder of Mubarak Shah whatever vigour there was in the Delhi Sultanate it disappeared and under his successor "the business of the States day by day fell into greater confusion and affairs came to such a pass that there were Amirs at 20 kos from Delhi who shook off their allegiance and made pretentions to independence."

Bahlol Lodi

In 1451, Bahlol Lodi, the governor of Depalpur and Lahore, taking advantage of the prevailing anarchy seized the throne and declared himself Sultan. He was tactful and he may be said to have recovered a certain amount of control extending from the foot of the mountain to Benaras and as far south as the borders of Bundelkhand. Even then he could not arrest disintegration. He succeeded in keeping the Afghan nobles and Jagirdars friendly and inspite of the traditional impatience of the Afghans of a controlling authority, by pandering to their whims, fancy and vanity. This plan of his was only short-lived and had immediate advantages, but in the long run, it proved disastrous. It lowered the dignity of the sovereign by reducing him to the position of a peer. It ushered in the rule of innumerable autocrats. Feudal reign was most likely to be the outcome of Bahlol's policy. It was as dangerous for the common people as for the sovereign. Such policy might have

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been appreciated by the Afghans but could not inspire any confidence among the non-Afghan people of India. It was clearly based on racial and tribal considerations and was, therefore, narrow, unprogressive and heavily lop-sided in a country like India. It carried in its core destructive elements which were likely to explode in tribal jealousies and the dissolutions of the artificially bolstered-up Afghan empire.[1] He handed over the administration of the Punjab to one of his relatives, Tatar Khan Lodi who served well during his life time.

Sikandar Lodi's reign

Sikandar Lodi, the son and successor of Bahlol Lodi had to reap the first fruits of that policy. No sooner did he succeed to the throne, than the Afghan tribal leaders insisted on the division of the empire. Had he agreed to the principle of division between his brothers, the logical conclusion would have been the dismemberment of the empire into six principalities. With great reluctance, he agreed to share it with Barbik Shah, but he changed his mind soon and reunited the empire. Able, warlike and shrewd as Sikandar was, he discovered the impracticability of his father's policy and decided to enforce discipline and obedience to sovereignty. He gave up the policy of meekness and assumed a high tone in his orders and court etiquette. His successes in wars, his personality, liberality and demeanour and his popularity among Muslim divines contributed to restore dignity, authority and power of the crown. But the tribal instincts of the Afghans and their greed for wealth and power were so strong that they looked forward with suppressed longing to the return of the days of Bahlol. As a set off against the power of tribal leaders, he mobilized the active support of religious leaders and persecuted the Hindus even at the risk of his popularity among the Hindus and took stern and quick action against the refractory nobles. One Tatar Khan who after the death of Bahlol began to act as if he were an independent ruler was immediately dealt with. A fierce battle was fought and Tatar was killed. Punjab then was given to Daulat Khan, Tatar's son, for governance. Sikandar tried hard to bring about stability but he could not achieve any remarkable success.

Decline entered the final phase during Ibrahim

The decline entered its final phase of fall during Ibrahim Lodi who succeeded to his father, Sikandar in 1517. The Hindus remained dissatisfied and the Muslim nobles grew turbulent. Erskine describes the actual position under Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in the following words : "These extensive possessions, though under the king, had no very strong principle of cohesion. The monarchy was a congeries of nearly independent principalities,

1. P. Saran : Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, p. 22.

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jagirs, and provinces each ruled by a hereditary chief, or by a zamindar or delegate from Delhi; and the inhabitants looked more to their immediate governors who had absolute powers in the provinces and in whose hands consequently lay their happiness or misery than to a distant or little known sovereign. It was the individual, not the law that reigned. The Lodi princes, not merely to strengthen their own power but from necessity had in general committed the government of provinces and the chief offices of trust to their own countrymen, the Afghans so that men of Lodi, Fermule and Lohani tribes held all the principal jagirs which from the habitual mode of thinking of their race, they considered as their own right and purchased by their swords rather than as due to any bounty or liberality on the part of the sovereign."

Punjab not a homogeneous unit

At the time of succession of Ibrahim (A.D. 1517) Punjab was not a homogeneous single unit. It was divided into different parts, independent of each other.

Bajaur,[1] the gate of India was under Haidar Ali, the leader of the Dilazak[2] Afghans. Sawat valley was dominated by Yusafzaie Afghans whose Sultan was Wais. Salt Range was being ruled over by Jud and Janjua[3] tribes. About A.D. 1480, Ismail Khan and Fateh Khan, the two sons of Malik Sohrab Khan and Ghazi Khan son of Haji Khan founded the three *deras* which still bear their names (Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Fateh Khan). They overcame the Lodies at Sitapur and established themselves as independent rulers. Multan under Sangah rulers had declared its independence and had no concern with the Lodies. The system of Government in these areas was tribal and confined to the collection and to a few cases which the custom had determined. Customary Law with admixture of Islamic law was followed.

Extent of Lodi Rule

The Lodies ruled only that area of the Punjab which included the Sarkars of Depalpur, Lahore, Sultanpur and Sirhind. Even here the prominent Governor Daulat Khan paid only a lip service to the Sultan. Notwithstanding all this, Sultan Ibrahim started well and ushered in a policy which aimed at the consolidation of the empire.

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1. Babar Nama as translated by Beveridge, p. 367.
2. *Ibid.* p. 367.
3. Fourteen miles north of Bhera lies the mountain range written in the Zafar Nama and other books as the Kohi-Jud. I had not known why it was called this. I know now on it dwell two tribes, Jund, Janjua. These two, from the old, have been the rulers and the lawful commanders of the peoples and hordes of the range and of the country wherein Bhira and Nilab is. Babar Nama, p. 379.

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He dismissed quite a large number of recalcitrant, disloyal and defiant nobles irrespective of race, rank, status or office and recruited the persons attached with him. He dismissed as big an officer as Mian Bhua who during Sikandar's time held the post of chief financial adviser, because he flouted his authority and managed the affairs as he liked without reference to the Sultan. Similarly he inflicted stern punishment on the chiefs who rose in rebellion. He put Azam Humayun Sherwani, and his son Islam Khan to death for having championed the cause of Jalal Khan, the leader of the pro-division party. Hussain Khan was also assassinated in his bed. Sultan had good reasons for adopting a firm attitude because Hussain Shah and Nusrat Shah of Bengal were working their way into Southern Bihar. Rana Sanga was trying to extend his influence in Eastern Rajputana and Babur was threatening to open an attack from the west.

Lodi Empire threatened on three sides

Obviously, an empire threatened on three sides could not afford dubious luxury of a long drawn-out civil war or allow narrow-minded and mischievous tribalism to stalk freely in the land. True to his policy, the Sultan attended to the affairs of the Punjab. In fact, the Lodies had been enjoying all but sovereign title ever since the days of Bahlol Lodi and therefore had come to regard the Punjab as if it were their own kingdom. Their leader, Daulat Khan ruled at Lahore as an uncrowned king for twenty years. With him was Alam Khan Lodi, the uncle of Ibrahim Lodi and an old claimant to the throne.

Under the circumstances, Ibrahim was anxious to assure himself of Daulat's loyalty. He called him to the court but Daulat did not go in person, though he sent his son, Dilawar Khan. The Sultan did not like this behaviour and reprimanded Dilawar Khan on that account; in fact the Sultan took him round and showed him the ghastly exhibition of dis-obedient commanders and warned if his father harboured any hostile design, he would be treated with similar harshness. Dilawar Khan, on his return, conveyed the hint of the Sultan to his father and also informed of the smouldering discontent among some of the nobles.

Daulat Khan's precarious position

Daulat Khan's position was quite precarious. His chief object was to retain the supreme authority in the Punjab. But how to achieve the object, certainly it was a problem. He was fully aware of the designs of Ibrahim. He was also conscious of the role which his house had played in ousting the Moghuls from the Western Punjab and naturally feared the movements of Babur on the Western side of Indus. Under the circumstances he marked time, probably because he expected that nobles opposing Ibrahim Lodi would settle with him thereby allowing him respite from that quarter, and with the lapse of

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time, it would dawn on Sultan that in the impending struggle against Babur he was more important than ever. Similarly he did not wish to offer any serious resistance to Babur obviously to keep on his goodside. Settlement between the two he would not like because, in that case, his position in the Punjab could not remain intact. This was the reason that Daulat Khan prevented Mulla Murshad whom Babur had deputed to prevail upon the Sultan to surrender the districts of the Western Punjab which belonged to his uncle, Ulgh Khan, from proceeding to Agra.

Daulat sends his son and Alam Khan to Babur

But the success of Ibrahim on one hand and that of Babur on the other made him realise that he would have to decide one way or the other (particularly after the conquest of Qandhar by Babur in 1522). The hint of threatening nature which Dilawar Khan conveyed to him had frightened him out of his wits. Moreover, the clouds of trouble that were gathering were dark for the Sultan to clear the political horizon. Hence Daulat Khan took the momentous decision. He sent Dilawar Khan and Alam Khan to Babur to persuade him to help them in ousting Ibrahim Lodi and placing Alam Khan on the throne. The reasons given for such a course of action were firstly, that Ibrahim was an incorrigible tyrant who had decimated a considerable number of nobles and secondly, Alam Khan would be highly deferential and friendly in his attitude towards Babur. The line of action taken was sufficiently vague.

It meant to incite Babur to depose Ibrahim but in it was made no mention of the commitments as to how the nobles of Lahore would help Babur in his task. In fact, such a spacious proposal had enough to lend itself to different interpretations. If Dilawar was cunning enough to keep it vague, Babur was equally clever not in demanding clear elucidation or provision. Babur, however, saw clearly that there was no solidarity among the Afghans and the time is ripe for adventurous drive.

He made most of the opportunity and embarked upon extensive operations to subjugate Punjab or on if possible even India.

BABUR'S INVASIONS

Bajaur

Earlier too, he had made some attempts at conquering India. In 1519, having possessed an effective artillery and competent gunners, he stoned Bajaur which fell after a spirited struggle. He looked upon this as the first step on the road to Hindustan. Here he ordered the wholesale massacre, not because it was to his liking but because he was to set an example. However, when he proceeded further to Bhera on

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the Jhelum he acted with great restraint[1], possibly because his object was to possess the country[2], if possible, by peaceful means.

Babur sends Mulla Murshad to Ibrahim

Probably to achieve this object, Babur despatched Mulla Murshad his ambassador to Sultan Ibrahim to demand restoration of the districts which once belonged to the Turks. The ambassador was detained at Lahore by Daulat Khan Lodi, much to the chagrin of Babur. The same year in September, Babur again marched through the Khyber, in order to subdue the Yusafzai and provision of Peshawar fort as a base for future operations in Hindustan but he was recalled by disturbing news from Badakhshan. For the third time Babur marched in 1520 through Bajaur towards Bhera.

Third Invasion

In this third invasion which took place in A.D. 1520, Babur advanced far into the heart of the Punjab and his objective seemed to have been the occupation of Lahore. The inhabitants of Bhera and then those of Sialkot submitted without resistance but not so the people of Sayyadpur. The attempted defence of Sayyadpur proved abortive and a large number of inhabitants were either put to sword or carried into captivity. Guru Nanak and his companion Mardana was, to all probability, near the scene. The wanton and indiscreet destruction of property and life hurt Nanak so much that he depicted the terrible scene in his verses. Apart from the general massacre, the destruction of horses, mansions, palaces and dishonouring of women gave strong jerk to Nanak's tender feelings which he expressed in the following lines :

> "The wealth and sensual beauty which had intoxicated them became their enemies. To the messengers (of death) the command was given to strip them of their honour and carry them off. If it seems good to Thee Thou greatest glory and if it pleases Thee Thou greatest punishment. Had they paused to think in time, then would they have received punishment. But the rulers paid no heed, passing their time instead in revelry, and now that Babur's authority has been established, the princes starve."

The Guru was also pained at the unequal character of the contest. On one side fought the trained organised army under the leadership of a veteran while on the other, an extemporised

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1. Do not hurt or harm to the flocks and herds of these people, not even to their cotton ends and needles.
2. "As it was always in my heart to possess Hindustan and as these several countries had once been held by the Turks, I pictured them as my own and was resolved to get them into my own hands whether peacefully or by force." (*Babur Nama*)

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defence force mostly consisting of the non-combatants of a peaceful city. Guru Nanak also lamented the neglect with which the Lodies had shown towards defence of their subject, and uttered "the dogs of Lodies have sported the priceless inheritance, and when they are dead, no one will regard them."

Fourth Invasion

Babur invaded for the fourth time in 1524. This time, he had been invited by Daulat Khan and Alam Khan Lodi. He easily came within ten miles of Lahore. Then he encountered Behar Khan Lodi who had been sent by Ibrahim against Daulat Khan and who having put Daulat Khan to flight came face to face with Babur. Behar Khan was defeated and Lahore was plundered and captured.

In a terrible army battle, Babur defeated his enemy and made his triumphant entry into the city where the houses were put to flames and the inhabitants were plundered by his soldiers after the fashion common to Babur's tribe.

For a few days Babur stayed in Lahore and then marched against Depalpur. The entire garrison in Dipalpur Fort was put to sword.

Daulat joined Babur

It was here that Daulat Khan along with his three sons joined Babur who then distributed the conquered territories among his chiefs. Daulat Khan was given Jullundur and Sultanpur against his long-cherished desire of occupying Lahore, his old possession along with other territories of Sultan and Dipalpur. This being so, Daulat Khan felt grievously hurt and rose in revolt but having been failed in it, he took shelter in the hills. Babur, thereupon, handed over Daulat Khan's territory to his son, Dilawar Khan who had joined Babur against his father. Babur had a mind to sack Sirhind but because of the defection of Daulat Khan, gave up the projected plan and went back to Kabul.

Daulat grievously hurt

Babur's Retirement. Daulat defeats Dilawar Khan and Alam Khan

On Babur's retirement, Daulat Khan immediately came down from the hills, seized his son Dilawar Khan, took Sultanpur, gathered a large force and defeated Alam Khan and got Dipalpur. Alam Khan fled straight to Kabul and invited Babur to march in India once again. But this time Babur entered into an agreement with Alam Khan. As per terms of agreement, Babur addressed letters to the Mughal Sardars in the Punjab to help Alam Khan seize the throne of Delhi. But when Alam Khan returned to India, the wily Daulat won him over.

A New Plan but failure

A new plan was decided upon while Alam Khan and Dilawar Khan were to attack and capture Delhi, Daulat Khan and Ghazi Khan should regain their power in the Punjab and consolidate it. It was expected that the plan would satisfy the

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interests of Alam Khan as well as Daulat Khan without the intervention of Babur. If it worked successfully, it would enable them to deal with both Abrahim and Babur. But it fell through because the clash that followed between Ibrahim Lodi and Alam Khan, the latter was completely defeated, and so was the case with Daulat Khan who failed in dislodging the Moghal grandees of Lahore.

Alam Khan reached Kabul and entreated Babur to undertake the fifth invasion of Hindustan.

Babur now crossed the frontier for the first time (November 1525) with the largest army he had ever led into Hindustan. Humayun was with him, with a contingent from Badakhshan. Crossing the Jhelum, the Lahore army also joined him. All told, his followers numbered not more than 12000 of whom perhaps only 8000 were effectives. Daulat Khan's forces melted away at Babur's mere approach and he himself fled to Malaut in the Hoshiarpur district. Moghul forces pursued him and forced him to submit to Babur who upbraided him for his treacherous conduct and sent him to Bhera where he expired shortly afterwards. The surrender of Daulat Khan and flight of Ghazi Khan brought the Punjab under the control of Babur without any opposition. His prestige rose higher than ever before.

Battle of Panipat

On April 21, 1526 Babur reached the battlefield of Panipat to try conclusions with the Sultan of Delhi who also marched at the head of 100000 horses and 100 elephants to fight an open engagement with Babur. The results were obvious. On one side were the men-at-arms of the medieval type with crowded ranks of spearmen and archers—on the other side were the well-equipped, well-generalled, and well-disciplined soldiers having the effective support of artillery. The inevitable happened. Ibrahim was slain in the battlefield and sovereignty of Hindustan passed on to Babur.

Absence of Political Stability

As a result of Babur's invasion, the future of the Punjab became more uncertain and political stability became a far cry. The Punjab became a cockpit of the struggle of three powers—Mughals, Afghans, nobles of the Punjab and Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. In this triangular contest, the Mughal emperor ultimately came out victorious, although the people suffered tremendously.

Guru Nanak's Anguish

In the course of all this, Punjab suffered a lot. Guru Nanak wreathed with pain at the sight and uttered :

Khurasan he ruleth and Hindustan he hadth invaded.
No blame to thee, who ordaineth.
The Moghul hath came for retribution.

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So much suffering hath been inflicted;
People are crying in agony. Hath thou not felt ?
To Thee, O Lord the Creator, all are alike.
Should a potentate kill a potentate, no grievance need be felt.

The potentate, a lion, hath, however, fallen on the herd of cattle; thou shall hold him to answer, O Lord.

The hounds have ruined the jewels (innocent lives) and none heedeth the dead.

Thou hath brought the nemesis; this is thy greatness.
He who assumeth greatness and ordereth as pleaseth him.
Is a mere worm to Thee, O Lord ! He reapeth as he hath sown.

Glorified, however, shall be he who liveth in death and forgetteth not the name, Saith Nanak.

Many Cracks in Administration

In the atmosphere of political disturbances and uncertainties, many cracks appeared in the political machinery. In fact it had been deteriorating since the decline and fall of the Tughlaq empire; but it headed towards its absolute disintegration as time rolled by.

The Wazarat department which was the king pin of the Sultanate administration was disorganised and its deterioration was almost complete under the Sayyed rulers of India. Bahlol Lodi did not make any attempt at its re-organisation, perhaps because he did not require any elaborate machinery. Sikandar Lodi paid only lip sympathy to the department. So was the case with Ibrahim Lodi. The results were obvious. With no central agency to keep regular serveillance, the Iqta-holders, Muqaddams, Rais or Chaudaries, started catering to their own ends. Sultan did exert to make up the deficiency but in view of the tremendous task he could not achieve the needful. History of the Lodi rule is replete with cases where Iqta-dar distorted or concocted figures to hide the amount of collections so as to enable himself to play fraud with the State. Muqaddams, Rais or Chaudaries who were the intermediaries between the State and the people in the case of Khalsa lands, or between Iqta-holders and the peasantry in the case of Iqtas, often indulged in malpractices. They extracted more from the people than what they remitted to the State or Iqta-holders.

Faulty Method of Governance

Even the method of governance was faulty. The Punjab like the rest of the area under Lodies was divided into Iqtas and Khalsa lands. The Iqta-holders were Mini-Sultans in their respective areas. They owed no other allegiance except attending the court, furnishing armies and remitting the amount of revenue as stipulated between them and the Sultan. Evidently,

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their status was sufficiently high as to attract followers even to be used against the Sultan, and this thing led to the birth of tendency among them, even to assert independence. The fast-deteriorating political situation and continued refractoriness became the order of the day. Besides this, most of the nobles started using their political power to exploit the people and squeezing them of their hard-earned money. No wonder Nanak was much pained at this gruesome and politically unhealthy situation and uttered certainly in anguish :

'The king had become wolves, and Muqaddams dogs.'

Bhai Gurdas beautifully sums up the state of affairs. He says :—

ਕਲਿ ਹੋਈ ਕੁਤੇ ਮੁਹੀ, ਖਾਜ ਹੋਆ ਮੁਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਸਾਈ ।
ਰਾਜੇ ਪਾਪ ਕਮਾਂਵਦੇ, ਉਲਟੀ ਵਾੜ ਖੇਤੀ ਕੋ ਖਾਈ ।
ਪਰਜਾ ਅੰਧੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਨ, ਕੂੜ ਕੁਸਤ ਮੁਖਹੁ ਅਲਾਹੀ ।[1]

"My Lord, it is strange that the people of Kali Age have developed the attitude of a dog and they take pleasure in swallowing ill-gotton things. The rulers commit sins and those who are herdsmen are killing the sheep themselves. The people, being ignorant, are not in a position to discriminate between falsehood and truth."

Prospective Benefactors indulged in Malpractices

"Those who posed as benefactors were engrossed in amassing wealth by fraudulent means. Love between man and woman was based on dollar; they met at pleasure and departed at will. The Qazi who occupied the seat of justice, accepted bribes and then passed unjust orders."[2]

Political Contradictions

Admittedly, the people suffered because of the incapacity and incapability of the state to protect their interests; but no less numerous their sufferings were because of the inability of the Sultan's to tackle political questions. Serious political contradictions in the political operations of the day had come up. The Turkish nobles who were relegated to the background by the Lodies were smarting under the Lodi rule. Tribal groups who had been invited by Bahlol to support him in his attempt at the establishment of his rule, did not like the despotism of the Lodi Sultans. Indian Muslim nobles also wanted to have respectable niche in the political set-up. The Hindus who had fought side by side the Muslims in the Punjab were also to be accommodated. The conflict of the nobles among themselves on the basis of race,

1. Bhai Gurdas : Var I.
2. Guru Granth : Ramkali Var I, p. 951.

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interest or status and also the communal question of the Hindus were such issues which required immediate attention and solution but no solution came forth with the result that political apparatus did not respond to the challange of times and it broke completely.

AGRARIAN POLICY AND THE CONDITION OF PEASANTRY

No Uniform Agrarian Pattern

During the first half of the 15th Century Delhi was ruled for a time by Feroz and then by a short-lived dynasty of Sayyads. This period was marked for continuous strife among nobles. In these circumstances it is, at the best, improbable that any general agrarian measures were prevalent. The conditions would make for diversity of practices in assessment and collection, and the probabilities are that each individual dealt with the peasants very much as he chose[1]. Nevertheless we may guess that group assessment gained ground at the expense of sharing or measurement because it was more suitable to the conditions which prevailed[2].

In the year 1451, the Sayyad dynasty gave place to the Afghan family of Lodi and Delhi began to recover a part of its former position. Upto 1453, it may be fairly described as holding the north of India.

Khalsa and Iqta lands

In a general way, the economy of the Lodi dynasty was basically agricultural. Land was divided into Iqtas and the Khalsa. Iqta land was given as Iqta to the grandees (Muqtas) of the State by the Sultan for their maintenance instead of cash salaries, while the other was under the direct control and ownership of the Sultan. The accounts of the Muqtas were settled at the department of Wazarat. By the time of the Lodies, the Muqtas seemed to have been officially called Wajahdars. The terms Muqta, Hakim and Amir were also used by the people for the assignees. Iqtas were assigned to the nobles excluding the land grants given to the scholars, Sayyad, and the pious persons by the Sultan for their maintenance. Iqtas differed in size. It might be a pargana, less than a pargana, a sarkar or the whole province.[3]

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1. Moreland Agrarian System, Vol. II, p. 67.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
3. Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqi : Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism in India.

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Administration of Khalsa lands

Khalsa lands were managed by Shiqdars, the supreme pargana officers whom the Sultan appointed as incharges of pargana. Most of the Shiqdars held the rank of Malik. The subordinate officers posted to the Parganas under Shiqdars were Amirs, Amins, and Qazis, the latter being a judicial officer. Like the Shiqdars, the Amirs were appointed in the Khalsa parganas by the Sultan. The corroborative evidence contained in the Waqiati-i-Mushtaqi reveals that Sultan Sikandar Lodi never transferred the Amins whom he once appointed in the parganas.[1] Apart from being revenue collectors, they also took precautionary measures to save the cultivated land from the natural calamities.

As regards Amin, he seemed to have been appointed in parganas to measure the land under cultivation either for determining the state demand of land revenue or knowing the exact yield (Jama) of a pargana or an Iqta. The Khalsa territories began to shrink during the weak rule of the successors of Feroz Tughluq and they nearly ceased to exist during the reign of the last Sayyad ruler. Sultan Bahlol shaped a new policy of his own regarding the Khalsa land after he had occupied Delhi. He did not reserve any extensive territory for the Khalsa, but set aside parganas in every Sarkar. As in other provinces, so in the western Sarkars of the Punjab, several parganas were reserved. The same policy seemed to have been followed by his successors.[2] The Khalsa parganas during the times of Bahlol, Sikandar and Ibrahim began to be administered through Dewani—Ala. Sometimes, the Muqta was required to make arrangements to send the revenue collected in the Khalsa parganas in his Sarkar to the royal exchequer.

Village

The lowest revenue unit was village, both in Khalsa lands and Iqtas. Its administration was carried on traditional line. The Muqaddams, Zamindars, Chaudhries and Rais—the hereditary chiefs of the villages—were accountable before the pargana officers for the administration of their villages. Being the intermediaries between the state and the peasantry, they rendered important services to both the parties. They were expected to safeguard the interests of the parganas on the one hand and facilitate the work of Government revenue officers on the other. They were put under the charge of Pargana officers, called by different denominational names *e.g.*, Muqta, Wajahdars and Shiqdars.

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1. Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqi : Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism, p. 147.
2. Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqi : Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism, p. 56.

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ASSESSMENT OF REVENUE

Assessment in Khalsa lands

There were three systems of revenue assessment—crop sharing, measurement, (Zabt system) and compounding (indigenous Kankut) prevalent in Northern India. Out of the three, the first and the last were common. Sultan Sikandar was very particular of the system of measurement for its merits. To facilitate this system, he introduced his famous gaz sikandari (yard) of 32 digits which was used at the time of every harvest. The Patwaries were charged with the duty of maintaining the registers of measured land under cultivation, and the work of measurement was done under the supervision of Amin or Amil. This system was in force in the Khalsa-territories only, but here too it could not be enforced strictly because of two reasons, viz., contumacious behaviour of the Muqtas, particularly in the reign of Sultan Ibrahim and the scattered Khalsa lands in different sarkars.

Assessment in Iqta lands

So far as the Iqtas were concerned, the Muqtas and Wajahdars were free to adopt any system they deemed more convenient. According to Moreland 'the facts on records justify the statement that the Afghan assignees had something like a free hand in the management of land and the peasants placed under them'.[1] In assessment, as distinguished from collection, the assignees appear to have had at the time a perfectly free hand, at least in practice. Some of the Muqtas were oppressive, extortionate and even cruel both in assessment and collection.

Assessment in Villages

Notwithstanding the fact that village was the lowest revenue unit, the growing tendency was the group assessment for the purpose of the state. The Qanugo, on the basis of his experience, memory and some record ascertained the future state of a group of villages and assessed the revenue. If the pargana was in the Khalsa, the Muqaddam of the village was required to pay the assessed amount either in cash or in kind. As there was acute shortage of gold or silver during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim, he ordered his officers to collect revenue in kind.

State Share

The state share in the agricultural produce was one third and it was collected by the Muqaddams. Having deducted his commission, he paid it to the state officers.[2]

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1. Moreland : Agrarian system of the Sultanate, p. 68.
2. Moreland : Agrarian system, p. 76.
"Abhas Khan says that one share of the produce was left to the peasant and half a share was taken by the Muqqadam as state dues during the reign of Sher Shah. As Sher Shah is reported neither to have reduced nor increased the state demand of revenue of the Lodis, we can surmise that it had continued since the Lodi period."

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Serious Defects

The Agrarian system as explained above suffered from certain defects inherent in it. The absolute freedom which the Muqtas enjoyed as regards assessment and collection left much scope for them to exploit peasantry. There are cases on record when the Muqtas collected revenue over and above the stipulated sum for which Iqtas were given to them, and strangely enough if the Iqta yeilded large account of revenue than it was stipulated by the Diwan, the assignees were allowed to keep it with them.[1] Furthermore, there was no proper system of assessment. Assessment on the basis of crop-sharing at the sowing was definitely detrimental to the interests of the peasants because none could take into account, even if some one desired, the natural factors affecting the crops. If the process was resorted to at the time of harvest, it was bound to inflict loss on state treasury on account of the ever-present temptations of the peasants to conceal some of the crop because it was well-nigh impossible for government officials to be present at the time of the harvesting. Similarly, Kankut system of assessment left scope for the Muqaddams to overcharge the peasants on one hand and remit the amount less than the due to the state. Measurement, no doubt, secured the interests of the state more than any other system; but it was applied only to the Khalsa lands. Besides, it did not ensure justice to the peasants because measurement alone could not determine the quantity and quality of a particular crop.

Condition worsened due to Impolitic Policies

The condition became still worse due to certain impolitic policies of the Lodi Sultans. Bahlol, the first of Lodi dynasty, in his efforts to procure throne of Delhi for himself offered assignments on a large scale to the Afghan leaders on whom he depended for military support. Afghans accustomed to tribal way of life, and succinctly attached to the idea of personal independence, regarded the Sultan no more than the first among them, and consequently ill-took the assertion of sovereign rights on the part of Sultan. Bahlol tolerated this attitude of theirs to a great extent, but Sultan Sikandar Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi were particular of asserting their sovereign rights and power. They emphatically established the fact that the king was the master of the land and the Iqtas could be assigned or resumed at the royal pleasure. Sultan Sikandar and Sultan Ibrahim replaced all the undesirable nobles by their favourites just after their accession.

As a result thereof, Muqtas or Wajahdars began to smart under their rules. The tendency was specially marked during

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1. Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqi : Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism, p. 149.

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the times of Ibrahim Lodi, because of his sternness in dealing with the disloyal, recalcitrant and defiant nobles irrespective of any consideration of blood, status or office. Naturally, this thing alarmed the powerful nobles including Daulat Khan Lodi who ruled at Lahore as an uncrowned King for twenty years.

Since Daulat Khan's chief object in life was to retain the supreme authority in the Punjab he began to prepare for his own safety.[1] In such situation, it was but natural for him to pay less attention to the revenue matters and no wonder, the Iqta holders, Muqaddams and other revenue officials including Shiqdars of the Khalsa began to indulge in malpractices causing a lot of inconvenience to the people and considerable loss to the Royal Exchequer. It was this state of affairs that led Guru Nanak to say that :

> 'The King had become Wolves and the Muqaddams Dogs'.

Condition of the Peasantry

Upto the 14th Century the economic condition of the Indian peasantry was not hard. This is borne out of the evidence provided by foreign and Indian writers from the 11th to the 14th centuries (Alberuni, Ibn Batuta, Abbas etc.). But by 16th century, the condition had undergone a change to such an extent that almost all foreign and many Indian writers are struck by the poverty of Indian peasants and do not fail to write about it. Sal Bank, while writing of the people between Agra and Lahore about the same period says, "Plebian sort is so poor that the part of them go naked."[2] Palssaert, a dutch visitor, remarked. "The common people live in poverty so great and miserable that the life of the people can be depicted or accurately described only as a home of stark want and the dwelling place of utter woes ...their houses are built of mud with thatched roofs. Furniture there is little or none, except some earthen wares, pots to hold water and for cooling." R H. Major[3] in his translations of the works of Nicoli Conti, Athnasius Nikitins Santoste Fanoetic also "refers to the poverty of Indian peasant in the 15th century". Similarly Babar witnessed extreme poverty and referred to Langoti, Kachhehri and poor standard of living of the peasants.[4]

The reasons for this were not far to seek. Apart from the natural calamities, draught, disease of the crops and excessive

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1. Tripathi R.P. : Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire, p. 25.
2. Quoted in Moreland's 'India at the death of Akbar.'
3. Lal, Studies in Medieval Indian History, p. 158.
4. *Ibid.* p. 158.

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rainfall, the faulty agrarian system, there was another responsible thing for the sad plight of the peasantry. It is clear beyond doubt that throughout the Sultanate period, in one region or the other of the country, the authority of the Sultanate was being openly challenged. Naturally the Sultans, Turkish or Afghans, thought of every possible means to suppress the recalcitrant elements. They followed the policy of leaving nothing but bare subsistence to the peasants. Admittedly, the policy was suicidal, for it killed the goose that laid the golden eggs. It left no incentive for improving the production or improving the methods of cultivation.

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Chapter 4

BHAKTI MOVEMENT AND NANAK

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The word 'Bhakti' is derived from the root, 'Bhaj' meaning 'to adore'. According to Sandilya, as a religious term Bhakti is defined as that particular affection which arises after a knowledge of the attributes of the adorable one. The origin of this cult can be easily traced in various hymns of the Vedas. The hymns addressed to Varuna, Savitri and Usha are full of devotion and piety. Sentiment of love for the supreme being is also expressed in the Rig Veda. The word 'Bhakti' occurs for the first time in the Upanishads. In the Svetasvatara Upanishad (I-vi-23) we come across the doctrine of self-surrender and grace which may safely be considered as twins, although the whole theme of the Upanishads is "salvation by knowledge, yet the beginnings of salvation by devotion make an appearance as shoots, tiny yet endowed with vigorous life." In Katha Upanishad also there are traces of Bhakti.

> To one who has the highest devotion (Bhakti) for God.
> And for his spiritual teacher (Guru) even as for God.
> To Him these matters which have been declared become
> manifest (if he be) a great soul (Mahatma).
> Yea, become manifest (if he be) a great soul.
>
> (*Hume's Translation*)

The Gita tries to expound Bhakti in a systematic manner. It is quite true that Gita synthesises the three paths of Karma, knowledge and Bhakti but it is also true that it, for the first time, expounds the main idea contained in Bhakti cult. The Ekant-ka-Dharma, the religion addressing itself to a single God in the Bhagwat Gita is but the first exposition of the doctrine of Bhakti. The doctrine of self-surrender and grace were also highlighted in Gita. "The author of the Gita was not slow to realize that the doctrines of the Upanishad were understood by a smaller number of intelligent people. The vast majority felt spiritual pangs and wanted an easier path to attain the highest objective. The subtleties of religion were difficult for them to understand. Moreover, various schools of philosophy were competing with one another to gain ascendancy over the minds of the people. The emotional aspect of religion could not find expression. The fundamental principles which these schools taught were impersonal and speculative. The people who were always in need of an

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ethical and emotional cult in which it was possible to find both satisfaction of the heart and moral guidance understood nothing of it. It was in these circumstances that the movement of Bhakti devotion blended with love of God, found a favourable atmosphere.

In Naradiya Bhakti Sutra, Bhakti has been eulogised and explained at length. Narad defines Bhakti as of the nature of supreme love with God.[1] Bhakti is expressive of the three things : (1) Devotion is individual love for God, free from attachment for worldly love. (2) It is not overshadowed by knowledge and action. It is the highest end. (3) It is manifested in thought, word and deed. This Sutra thus praises love for God in the highest terms, and regards this path as the superior-most to all. Doctrine of Grace has also been hinted at. Not only this, the Sutra dwells on eleven types[2] of Bhakti which are, in fact, various steps, one above the other of the ladder[3] which take us to the highest goal. In Sandilya Sutra also Bhakti is dealt with as one of the paths to salvation.

Like Nardiya Sutra or Sandilya Sutra Bhagwat is a very important document of Bhakti. According to Dr. Raj Kumar, "it will not be wrong to call it the text book of this school". Louis Renon states that Bhakti in Bhagwad Gita is written in a picturesque form. In this book, the intense attachment has been recommended for the devotee. The affection aspect of the personality has been pressed into service to realise the highest objective. Emotional love stands supreme. The Bhakti, however, is no longer the old contemplative meditation of God, nor is it knowledge or any kind of activity but is a feeling.

But Bhakti as a cult creed or culture began to be taught systematically first in the southern India; and then in the north from the 8th century onwards. The saints of the Dravid were the originators of this school. These saints flourished between 200 and A.D. 900. In the 8th century, the Bhakti as a cult began to make strides. As a matter of fact, from the 8th century to the 15th century, the South was the home of the religious reforms : it was there that the Vaishnava and Shaivite saints started the schools of Bhakti, and Sankara and Ramanaya Nimbaditya, Basva, Vallabhacharya and Madhava expounded their philosophical systems. Thus the oft-held view that Bhakti movement was the 'response' to the impact of Islam is automatically proved to be wrong.

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1. Bhakti Sutra, 2.
2. Religions of Ancient India, p. 102.
3. (i) Attachment to virtue and glory. (ii) Attachment to forms. (iii) Attachment to adoration (iv) Attachment as a servant. (v) Attachment as a friend. (vi) Attachment as parents. (vii) Self-surrender. (viii) Absorption in meditation. (ix) Supreme anguish of separation.

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Scholars have fathomed deep to find out the reasons as to why the South became the home of religious reform and have found the answer in the contemporary political and social changes which the people underwent. In the north, the empire of Harsha broke up; political unity disappeared and a number of principalities were established which were engaged in unending wars with one another; Budhism began to lose its grip on the hearts of the people: firstly, because it did not appeal to heart, secondly, after Harsha it had no royal potentate to support it and thirdly it had lost its simplicity and had turned a religion of rituals and priestcraft and esoteric practices.

Jainism also was faring no better on account of almost the same causes which operated in the case of Buddhism. Both these religions had much in the realm of ideas and sacrifices etc. were incorporated by later religious developments, yet they ceased to be popular among the people. In their wake, Hindu missionaries began to work for the rejuvenation of Pauranic Hinduism. They found the champions of their cause even in certain rulers. Nar Singh Varma Pallava, was vigorously advancing their cause. During the 7th and 8th centuries, the Chalukyas and Pallavas, the two dominant powers, south of Narbada, were engaged in two common aims to revive Hinduism and to destroy one another. Before the end of the 8th century they had succeeded in both aims. They had given a mortal blow to Buddhist ascendancy and they had so worn themselves out as to allow the Cholas from the south and Rashtrakutas from the north to usurp their dominions. The 8th century was thus a period of revolutionary activity in religion and politics of ceaseless conflict of ideas of people, of dramatic rise and overthrow of dynasties, of philosophical debate in schools and sectarian dispute in temples. Such an atmosphere gave a tremendous impulse to thought and feeling. Mens' minds were, for the time being, freed from the tyranny of old traditional ways and thrown open to receive suggestions from unfamiliar quarters and no wonder, the suggestions of Bhakti were received warmly.

Bhakti movement in southern India ran on the parallel lines of Vaishnavism and Shaivism. In both Vaishnavism and Shaivism, we have first a school of mystics and saints who composed devotional songs in the vernacular and then, at a later stage a school of philosophers who created theistic systems of thought.

The Vaishnava mystics and saints were known as ALVAR. It has been well said that they filled the place between the Bhagwad Gita and Ramanuja, for the fountain of Vaishnava Bhakti rises in the Gita, passes through the songs of the Alvar, gathers its waters in the system of Ramanuja and flows out

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later in varied streams all over India. The Alvars flourished during the 7th and 8th centuries. They were all wandering singers who were popularly supposed to be made after God. The greatest of them are Nammal Var and Tirumangai Alvar. The former's four works in Tamil are regarded by southern Vaishnava as equivalent to the four Vedas. The hymns of the Alvars are collectively known as the *Nalayana Prabhandham* and they contain some of the most moving devotional poetry in the world. One pleasing feature of the Alvar movement was that in it, distinctions of caste, rank and sex were rejected. The Alvars included among them a blind, a beggar, a woman, a man of the depressed class and non-Brahmins as well as Brahmins. In fact, the most characteristic feature of their teaching was that God is accessible to all without any distinction of caste, rank or culture and that by love and self-surrender every man and woman can obtain salvation.

Similar Bhakti movement was preached by the southern Shaivites. Corresponding to the Alvars in Vaishnavism we have Naynmars in Shaivism. The traditional number of the Shaivite saints of the Tamil country is sixty-three. But the most important of them Appar and Inanasambandar belonged to the 7th century and Sundremurte to the 8th. Nam Brandar-Nambi who was a contemporary of the Vaishnava teacher, Nathamuni in the time of the Chola king *Raja Raja the Great collected towards* the end of the tenth century all the hymns of the Shaivite saints, then in existence, and arranged them in the form of eleven books called Tirumurai or sacred books. This collection included Tevaram of Appar, Inanasambandar and Sundramurte and Tiruvachakam of Manikkavachakar. These hymns with their intimate personal appeal to Shiva as the Lord, the father and lover of human souls, rank very high in the devotional literature of the world.

Almost contemporary to Vaishnavite and Shaivite Bhakti, another stream of religious thought known as Advaita philosophy started making its impression on the people. The most important exponent and certainly not the first one was Shankar. He was both a great champion of the orthodox faith and an ardent reformer. The one aim of Shankar was to remove the fatal weakness of Hinduism, the fissiparous tendencies of its religious sects which all claimed their authority from the same source, namely the Srutis. He employed the whole power of his keen analytic mind and his matchless dialectical skill in overthrowing all systems which disagreed with one another and in establishing one logical system. Moreover, according to him Monism (Advaitism) was the outstanding feature of Hindu theology and also the central theme of his philosophy. According to this system, 'God was one, there was no other besides Him'; 'God was the only reality all,

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else was illusion" The world was merely a phenomenon, an appearance, not a true reality. It evolved out of the principle of illusion (maya). Maya by self-modification gave rise to individuals distinguished by name and form, and the indiviuals made up the whole universe. In fact, however, the multiplicity of individuals is only apparent; in reality, they are one. The plurality of sentient beings is equally illusory. The human ego is identical with God, his individuality is Maya, his reality is Brahman. It is due to ignorance that he does not perceive the identity, and so lives a miserable existence in the phenomenal world which is only a creation of illusion.

As long as the ignorance lasts the weight of the phenomenal presses upon man. The phenomenal appears real and during the period of ignorance has to be taken into account. This phenomenal world has a god Iswar, who is endowed with good attributes. He is the creator who evolves and dissolves the world in cycles. The human soul looks up to Him for reward and punishment, for grace and forgiveness. It realises its good through knowledge of Iswara. Thus in the Sarkar's system "there are two worlds : one real, the other unreal; and there are two kinds of knowledge : one the higher for the removal of ignorance and the realisation of the absolute Brahman, the other, the lower, to win Iswara's favour. But the lower knowledge and its end, Iswara are both phenomenal and true freedom is only attained by rising above it to the real."

No doubt, Shankar established a logical system, that the sacred scriptures of the Hindus had one consistent teaching to impart and that the differences were due to misunderstanding and lack of true insight, but he did not contribute directly to the Bhakti cult as some scholars have averred.[1] The reasons are not far to seek. Shankar was the protagonist of the path of knowledge. Secondly his system raised God's unity to such a height of abstractness as to daze the ordinary mortal, who could not establish personal relation with Him. Thirdly by compromising his idealism by the acceptance of world of lower good and lower truth, he almost handed over this poor mortal bound hand and foot to the mercies of the priest and his elaborate ceremonial.

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1. A misunderstanding prevails in the minds of many interpreters of Shankara that according to him 'Gyan' and Bhakti are fundamentally opposed to each other. But the real position which is relevant to Shankar's philosophy of Sadhna is not the opposition between Gyan and Bhakti but one between different grades of Bhakti.....Bhakti or the highest devotion is spoken by Sankara as consisting in actual experience of the highest truth. (Dr. Ram Partap Singh, The Vedanta of Sankara, Ist Edition, Vol. I, p. 125.)

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But indirectly Shankar did contribute to the Bhakti cult by establishing monistic philosophy; he expressly and clearly told the people that there was only God who was real and all else was unreal. This psychologically moulded the people to be devoted to the all-powerful Lord instead of innumerable gods and goddesses whose worship was the article of faith. Furthermore, by opening the ranks of Sanyasis to all castes and by regarding anybody—even a *chandal* who had learnt to look on phenomenon in monastic light as his Guru, he tried to build a tradition in favour of international brotherhood and against caste system which later on was embodied by the protagonists of Bhakti cult.

However, the religion of love and devotion (Bhakti) which the Alvars and Adiyars were making popular soon found its own philosophic exponent in Ramanuj who intellectualised it and lifted it out of the world of illusion into the world of reality. Ramanuj (1016-1137) by his theory of modified monism (Vashisht Advaitvad) gave Bhakti theology a respectable understanding alongside the rigid monism and intellectualism of the Vedantic school of Shankar. This he accomplished by forwarding room in Vedantic monism for a personal God—the first essential for Bhakti and for individual immortal souls. An erodite scholar Bhandarkar finds that Ramanuj holds to three eternal principles. 'Chit', the individual soul; 'a chit', the insensate world; and 'Ishwara', the supreme soul. The first two are the body of the third and are related to it as attributes to substance and so modified monism is emphasised upon.

Ramanuj's chief object was to give a philosophic basis to Bhakti and to prove that Bhakti was the central teaching not only of Tamil Prabandha but also of Prasthana-Traya. He tried to be faithful to the spirit of the Brahmanical tradition as well as to the spirit of the Alvars. From the former, he derives the philosophy of the Absolute and from the latter its theism. Thus Ramanuja did in this what the Bhagwad Gita did in its day, but in a more systematic manner. The first of his whole system is the manner in which he conceives the relation between God and the world of matter and soul. He recognises three ultimate realities—God, soul and matter. They are organically connected with Him and are inseparable from Him as the attributes are inseparable from the substance. Their relation to Him is like relation of the body to the soul. The three form one living organism. They are a complex whole, an organic unity. "Hence Ramanuja's philosophy is called Vashishta Advaita to differentiate it from the Advaita of Shankara according to which there is one simple ultimate reality, Brahman. The famous Upanishadic sentence Tat-Twam-Asi is interpreted by Ramanuja in the light of his

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Vashisht-advaita as meaning that God who is the cause of the world (Tat) is identical with God who is the In-dweller of the soul (Tvam). Again, as Ramanuja's is a system of theism, Bhakti holds a higher place in it than Gyan. According to him, Gyan Yoga is only meditation on the nature of the soul (Tvam) for the purpose of realising that it is different from its physical sheath. But Bhakti Yoga is a higher stage of meditation, accompanied by love, on the nature of God for the purpose of realising soul's relation to Him. And Moksha, which comes only after death to one who has perfected his Bhakti, is the enjoyment of bliss with a superior body in the presence of God in Vaikuntha. But easier than the path of Karma, Gyan and Bhakti which is open only to the first three castes is the path of Prapatti or absolute self-surrender to God which is open to all and is also the quickest path."

Thus Ramanuja was anxious on the one hand, to maintain all the ancient restrictions of the higher castes and on the other, to open the portals of the city of God even to the lowest castes. He did all that was possible in his day for religious uplift of the lower classes. He brought thousands of men into Vaishnava fold, gave them a religious faith and made them adopt Vaishnava customs and manners without violating the principles of the orthodox Brahmins.

On the plane of Bhakti ideology, the contributions of Shaiva Sidhanta and Vir-Shaivism are also important. Arulandi, the founder of the former, apart from having full faith in the supreme reality of Shiva and the Bhakti as a means to realise Him regarded the help of the Guru as essential. Basava, the founder of Vir-Shaivism boldly rejected caste, denied the supremacy of Brahmins, condemned sacrifices and other ceremonies and insisted on Bhakti and worship of one God Shiva.

Bhakti Movement in the North

From the thirteenth century onwards, the centre of activities pertaining to Bhakti movement shifted to the north. Various reasons can be ascribed to it. The first and foremost reason was the conquest of Hindustan, particularly north India by the Muslims. Within a quarter of a century, the Muslim arms had overrun the country from the Punjab to Assam and from Kashmir to Vindhyas. In the course of conquests many temples and the idols standing there were razed to the ground and this was certainly a shock for the general masses because of their unflinching faith in the immortality and invincibility of gods. This led to the heart-searching on the part of the people with respect to their faiths, with the result that they started wishing for certain modifications to be made in their religion. Secondly, since the people in India had for themselves seen that in spite of gallant resistance put

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up by the Rajputs, they have been defeated and the major cause of their defeat was the lack of cohesion and power of combinations which on analysis had been found to be the reflection of the caste-riven and privilege-ridden society. And certainly cohesion or unity could be achieved only if the mind of the nation was prepared. Hence keeping in view the special role which religion could play in this task, some such religious ideology was needed that might ensure the psych required for the emotional integration of the Hindu society.

Thirdly a large number of people—many of them belonging to low castes were becoming converts to Islam. The reasons were two-fold; fear which the conquerers struck, and the status of dignity which it was denied to the lower castes. The intelligent among the Hindus began to think of ways and means to preserve their identity. The already-found method i.e. to say to seek safety behind their castes had only a limited success; some other more positive method was the need of the hour. No wonder, Bhakti Marg provided the one.

Fourthly the Muslims who came into India made it their home. They lived surrounded by the Hindu people and a state of perennial hostility with them was impossible. Mutual social intercourse led to mutual understanding. Many who had changed their faith differed little from those whom they had left. Thus after the first shock of conquests was over, the Hindus and Muslims became prepared to find a via-media whereby to live as neighbours. The effort to seek a new life necessitated to the development of a new culture of which the most important adjunct was religion.

Not singly but cumulatively, all the factors enumerated above operated to make the north as the seat of Bhakti movement. The movement, to put it tersely, was, in part a reaction against the increasing formalism of the orthodox cult, in part an assertion of the demands of the heart as against the intellectualism of the Vedanta, in part an attempt at the emotional integration of the people, both Hindus and Muslims and in part the preservation of the Hindu society against the gushing onslaught of Muslim religio-politico Imperialism.

Ramanand, however, was the first exponent who spread Bhakti in the north. According to a popular saying 'Bhakti arose first in the Dravid land, Ramanand brought it to the north and Kabir spread it to the seven continents and nine divisions of the world.'[1] It is quite true that various ideas

1. Dr. Ramji Lal Sahayak : Kabir Darshan, 1st Edition (1962), p. 349.

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about Bhakti were floating in the atmosphere, but Ramananda gave a new vitality to them.

For him, Bhakti was deep and fervent passion. The most important features of his 'Bhakti' was that he recognised no caste and preached absolute social equality for all, even the privilege of studying the scriptures. All previous thinkers, more or less, had accepted the institution of caste; but Ramanand had nothing to do with it. Indeed, he may be said to have begun what is known as the religious rennaissance in medieval India. He also used the language of the people in his hymns and thus laid the foundation of modern vernacular literature in northern India. Thus he did in his day what the authors of the Buddhist Psalms did in their day. Religion was brought home to the hearts of the common people through songs which all of them could understand.

After Ramanand, the Bhakti movement in the north split itself into two streams—the worship of Rama and the worship of Krishna. To the former class belong Tulsi Das, the author of well known Ram Charit-Manas, Nabha Das, the author of Bhakta Mala, a book giving the lives of the saints, and Maluk Das, the founder of a lay sect of Ramandis.

When we turn to the latter class i.e., to say whose worship centres round Krishna, we find two classes—the worship of Krishna and Rukamani on the one hand, and the worship of Krishna and Radha on the other. The saints of Maharashtra viz. Gianeshwar, Namdev, Eknath, and Tuka Ram represent the former while the sects founded by Nimbarka, Vishnusvami, Vallabha and Chaitanya in other parts of the country represent the latter. "Naturally, the Bhakti that takes as its symbol the love of the husband is pure and serene, while that which takes as its symbol the love of the lover is passionate and tempestuous. Our Bhakti Shastras call the former *Kanta Bhava* and the latter *Mathur Bhava.*

There are two other Bhaktas—Kabir and Nanak, each of whom forms a category in himself. Kabir (1490-1518), inspite of sharing beliefs in doctrine of Karma, Sansara, Maya, Lila, Moksha and Vairaga, futility of caste system, with other Bhakta's was the first who proclaimed that both Hindus and Muslims were ignorant because both of them behaved in religious exclusiveness. He asserted that his ideology did not make any distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim and enjoined upon the followers of both the dominant religions of India to follow Bhakti Marg. He cut himself off from all traditions and authority in religion such as Ved or Quran. He spoke from personal flaming experience; he rejected doctrine of Avtars and proclaimed his faith in the absolute, timeless and attributeless God to be known by any name.

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By doing this, he made Bhakti a national religion or a religion of the centre which could appeal to both Hindus and Muslims alike. Certainly, it was an attempt to provide a programme of synthesis to the people of India, having diverse faiths, to coalesce together.

BHAKTI MOVEMENT AND GURU NANAK— A STUDY IN COMPARISON

Nanak (1469-1538) the founder of the religion of the Sikhs lent a new dimension to the Bhakti Movement. There were many reasons for that. The first and foremost was the territory where the Bhakti system of Nanak was evolved, shaped and set in motion. Punjab as it served the stage for the drama of the innumerable movements and migrations of the people, could not afford to be rigid in religious matters, beliefs and social behaviour. Brahmanical religion and its social system did make much headway in post-Buddhistic period, yet its hold was not as strong as it was in the Indo-Gangetic Valley or other areas of the country. That was the reason that Bhaktas in those areas of the country could not make Bhakti a distinct movement which, shortly after, succumbed to the Brahmanical influence or to the totems of the people. Chaitanya's Vaishnava movement is an ample proof of this tendency. Vaishnava's Bhakti which Chaitanya preached became Brahmanical in nature and tone under the direction of his disciples who shifted the scene of activities to *Virandavan*. So was the fate, more or less with the Bhakti systems of other Bhaktas in different parts of the country. Even Kabirism after the death of Kabir fell from its ideal and became only a part of Brahmanical religion. Guru Nanak's case, however, was different. He worked the programme of Bhakti independently and among the people who because of the historical circumstances were dynamic and not slow to appreciate the merits of the new programme. In spite of the fact that Brahmanical religion was in ascendancy, the protestant and non-comformist tradition did not die altogether. In fact, it was upheld by heterodox cults and sects like Kaplikas, Avdhutas, Agropanthies and Nathpanthies and perhaps Sahajayan Buddhists, but their ideas and practices were all strictly limited within their respective circles of men and women initiated by their respective Gurus.

After the political consolidation of the gains of military conquest of the Turko-Afghan Muslims when Brahmanism and Brahmanical society were obliged to stage a retreat, at any rate, for the time being, these cults seem to have come to enjoy a relatively wider popularity than hithertofore. The non-conformist atmosphere could not but influence the thought-pattern of Guru Nanak. Although we do not have any tangi-

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ble evidence as to the existence of Sahajyana Buddhism, yet its social comment and the ideal of Mahasukh can easily be discerned in the composition of Guru Nanak. Similarly Yogic terminology and imagery have been copiously used by Guru Nanak, though their social attitudes and their esoteric and ascetic practices were rejected as hypocritical postures. Sufi mystics had contributed their mite in broadening the outlook and sharpening the edges of dissent against the orthodox Brahmanical modes.

Admittedly, the non-conformist and protestant tone of the aforesaid cults went a long way to help Nanak to give distinct colour to his Bhakti which was certainly more poignant in its criticism of the contemporary society and more positive in its emphasis of reshaping social and moral norms. Other Bhaktas possibly could not do so with so much vehemence because of different situations in which they had to work.

There was yet another point which made the Bhakti of Nanak different from that of other Bhaktas. After the fall of Buddhism, many religious streams such as Vajrayana Buddhism, Sahjyana Buddhism, Sahjyana Vaishnavism, Baulism and Nathism emerged. In their respective periods, they played their part in the lives of the people. In course of time, these sector cults incorporated tantric beliefs & esoteric practices which were certainly debasing in their effect in society. Besides this, in order to achieve the state of Mahasukh or Sahaj, the ultimate objective of all these sects, they pleaded absolute union of the niratama imagined as the female principle and the bodhichitta imagined as the male principle or of Sunyate as the male principle and Karuna as the female principle.

Logically it follows that in ordinary human and temporal terms, the concrete image of such union would be one of mithuna, that is, of complete physical union of man and woman. Indeed, this was the image that the Buddhist Siddacharyas held up not only in their doahs but also in the pantheon of gods and goddesses reared up by the Vajrayana and Sahajyanas for instance. Nath Panthis did not accept the image, but they too thought in terms of physical union.

The Vaishnava Bhaktas did accept not merely the term but also the mithuna image, the concept and practice that went alongwith it. Consequent upon all this, a sort of crude vulgarity crept into the original conception with the result that the society degenerated morally and socially.

Guru Nanak's achievement is this that he did not allow such practices of the aforesaid sects to enter into his Bhakti

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programme. He certainly adopted Sahajya as the final goal but the method to achieve it was different. He enjoined upon his followers to work for Sahajya while leading the householders's life. Ascetic and esoteric practices were not recommended to the seekers. On the other hand, they were advised to follow Nam-Marg. The image of Mathuna to say the complete physical union of man and woman was repudiated and in its place the merging of self with the Self was enjoined upon.

Furthermore, the impact of the Muslim conquest and the advent of Islam in India in its wake added new facet to the situation. The Islamic faith in the oneness of God and social equality coupled with the proselytising zeal and political backing shook the body-social and religious thinking in India. The impact was more deeply felt in the Punjab because of geographical position and relatively less rigid atmosphere. The challenge, being more serious, the response was more concrete and correct. Guru Nanak's Bhakti was positive in its social-content, clear in its spiritualism and emphatic in the pursuance of the ethical principles. Guru Nanak like Kabir denounced formalism and the externalia of the religious life and idol worship but unlike both Kabir and other Bhakti reformers, he was opposed to renunciation and did not regard life a suffering and a veritable hell. He, on the other hand, believed that the life is all pleasure; there is a no pain if one is absorbed in Him. Similarly the world was looked upon by the Guru as the dwelling place of the Almighty. The Guru with all the vehemence at his disposal, pronounced that a religion of the people was the need of the times and enjoined upon his followers to develop secular outlook. His slogan, No Hindu, No Musalman, beautifully epitomised in itself, the purpose of the Guru.

As a corollary to it, the Guru advised the people that they should live a householder's life because doing so does not hamper any one from achieving the state of bliss (sahaj). Indeed, the Guru emphasised the point that honest labour was a necessary qualification for one who sought realisation of God.

> "He who eats what he has earned by his own labour, and gives some to (others)—Nanak, he it is who knows the true way." (Var Sar. Moh I)

In these few simple words, Nanak urges the need for honest labour for livelihood, underlines the value of social co-operation and points out the easiest path of salvation. Many Bhaktas including Kabir earned their livelihood by taking up their respective caste-professions but none of them specifically

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urged respect for a householder's life or declared that it was 'the true way'.

By declaring as such, the Guru ushered in a new era in the religious history of the country. Hitherto, it was generally understood that spiritual matters had no relation with the worldly affairs, now they were made as adjuncts of the endeavour to soul-bliss. Guru Nanak, on his own part, took keen interest in matters, social, moral and political. His 'Babar Vani' represents an attitude what the Guru wished his followers to develop.

A FEW CONCLUSIONS

After the perusal of the above narration, the following inclusions emerge :—

(1) Bhakti Movement was indigenous in its origin.

(2) In its initial phases, it was confined to the yearnings of soul for its absorption in the supreme lord and it had got nothing to do with social, moral, political uplift of the country. It also could not emancipate itself from the traditional Brahamanical fetters.

(3) With Ramanuja and Ramananda, it entered into modern phase and social problems such as caste system etc. began to be considered in the context of religious reforms.

(4) Bhakti, as preached by Kabir was different from that of other Bhaktas, as for instance, Kabir substituted Nirguna God for Sarguna Lord and refused to accept any religious or traditional authority. With Kabir, Bhakti Movement was an independent system based on his soul's experiences. He did not regard Bhakti of any use if it had no relevance to the peoples of the world. But he did neither condemn sanyas nor evolve any organisation to see his ideals put into practice.

Under Guru Nanak, Bhakti Movement embarked upon a unique course. It ceased to be a complex organism which it had become as a result of the matrix of mystic tradition and confused ideas about reform. It became a religio-social movement with definite purpose of ameliorating the society.

ESSENTIALS OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

As it is clear from the above, the Bhakti movement was not sudden and spectacular in its emergence. It was the outcome of the strivings of quite a large number of Bhaktas,

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social, political and religious situations in the period spreading over a long span of time. This being so, it is not possible to find uniformity with views of different Bhaktas but still there were certain features which then were held by almost all the Bhaktas.

(1) *Belief in one Supreme God of Love and Grace*

All the Bhakti reformers have faith in one supreme Lord, which is omnipresent, eternal and omnipotent—although most of the Bhaktas in the south perceived him as Vaishnu or Shiva while others in the north (Kabir and Sikh Gurus excepted) worship him either as Ram or as Krishan. Kabir generally and Sikh Gurus particularly worship Nirguna—attributeless—Brahm.

(2) *Faith in Bhakti—Emotional Worship*

All the Bhaktas agree that God can be attained through devotion to and meditation on Him. One should have 'Kant Bhava' or 'Madhur-Bhava' for God or simple Bhava. The exaltation of Bhakti above Gyan and Karm Marg, and above the performance of rites and ceremonies has been the creed of all the Bhaktas.

(3) *Reverence paid to the Guru*

For the attainment of God, the help of a Guru or a spiritual teacher is imperative. As Dhanna Bhagat uttered :—

> I did not know the way of recognising Him who dwelleth in the heart. I burned in the fire of worldly love and fell into death noose. I collected so many faults and sins and filled my heart with them that I forgot God, the Supreme Being.

"When the Guru caused the wealth of divine knowledge to enter me, I meditated on God, and accepted in my heart that He was one."[1]

(4) *Belief in the Immortality and Individuality of Soul*

Soul is immortal. It is not subject to death of a body. The man himself is responsible for the entanglements of his soul, which takes birth again and again and suffers from the worldly troubles. It has an individuality of its own; but it is nevertheless a part of the Divine Soul.

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1. Macaulliffe : Sikh Religion, Vol. V, p. 110.

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(5) *The doctrine of self-surrender*

All the Bhaktas agree that the attitude 'I am nothing, everything is God's during Bhakti' invokes God's Grace very quickly. One who does so, raises oneself far above self and can understand God and his creation in right perspective and thus can enjoy the highest beatitude (ਸਹਿਜ). Involvement with self breeds ego which is a great hurdle on the road to soul-bliss. Kabir utters, 'when I was proud, Thou was not in me; now that Thou art in me, I am not proud.'

(6) *Rituals, ceremonies, pilgrimage etc. have no relevance to soul-bliss*

Rituals, ceremonies, fasts, pilgrimages have been, more or less, denounced by almost all the Bhaktas. These things have nothing to do with the Soul-Bliss. If God was omnipresent, He was within the body of a man as well and hence there is no need of going from place to place in search of Him. As Guru Nanak wrote : 'In the body is God, the body is the temple of God, in the body are pilgrims and travellers.'

(7) *No caste or creed*

Likewise, castes or creeds have been condemned by the Bhaktas but the fierce attack was made only by Kabir and Nanak. Kabir wrote 'The courageous man who effaceth caste and pride shall prove a saint.'

(8) *No special sanctity for Sanskrit and emphasis on teachings through the vernaculars*

Almost all the Bhaktas did not give undue importance to a particular language as it had been done in the case of Sanskrit. They preferred the language of the people to be used to convey to them the message of Bhakti. Since God was the same for all, He could be worshipped and His knowledge transmitted in any language.

(9) *Idol worship*

Out of the galaxy of Bhaktas, Kabir and Nanak were the only ones who condemned idols. According to Kabir 'God being absolute, belief in idols and Avtars is gross superstition.' 'The images are all lifeless. They cannot speak. I know, for I have cried aloud to them.'

RENOWNED BHAKTAS

RAMANUJ

Ramanuja was born in 1016 at Tirupati in the neighbourhood of Madras. His father was a Dravida Brahman of

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Harita family and his mother's name was Kantimati. He was, at first, the pupil of Yadava Parkasha who was a follower of Shanker at Conjeevarm; but later on, he became the disciple of Yamun a mum of the two classes of Vaishnava teachers Alvars and Acharyas or contraversialists. Ramanuja belonged to the latter. His is one of the greatest names in Vaishnava History, for by his theory of modified monism (Vashista Advaita), he gave Bhakti theology a respectable intellectual standing alongside the rigid monism and intellectualism of the Vedantic school of Shankara. This he accomplished by finding room in vedantic monism for a personal God, the first essential for the Bhaktas, and for individual immortal souls.

Brahman (Vishnu) is supreme Lord of all (Ishvara) and as the universal soul, the Highest Person (Purshotam). He creates, destroys and preserves. He does not create out of nothing for creation out of absolute non-existence is inconceivable. His creation means change from one stage to another, from existence in the casual condition to existence in the effect condition (Karya). At first Ishvara was one without a second; but from within Him appeared matter and souls (ਪ੍ਰਕ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵ) which form his body. So both matter and souls are real but they do not bind Ishvara although they are subservient to His will and are dependent upon Him for existence.

The ultimate aim of a Bhakta is to attain Moksha which is the enjoyment of bliss with a superior body in the presence of God in Vaikuntha.

Of the three paths—Gyan Marg, Karam Marg, Bhakti Marg—for realising the soul relation with God; the height is, however, Bhakti Yoga. The former two paths make one realise only that soul is different from its physical sheath, but Bhakti Yoga makes one realize the soul relation with God These three Yogas can be practised only by the three higher classes.

There is another way of realising union with God and that is *Prapatti* or absolute self-surrender to God. This path is open to all, even to the Shudras or Women.

The Guru or spiritual preceptor has been given a significant place in the system of Ramanuja and the reliance on the Guru was the right of everybody –even outcastes.

"Thus Ramanuja was anxious, on the one hand, to maintain all ancient requirements of the higher castes and, on the other hand, to open the portals of the city of God even to the lowest castes. He did all that was possible in his day for the religious uplift of the lower classes."

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RAMANAND

Ramanand's place in the history of Bhakti movement is unique for he brought to northern India the religious revival which Ramanuja had initiated in the south, apart from making modifications in the general genre of the movement. Dr. Tara Chand regards Ramanand as the bridge between the Bhakti Movement of the south and the north.[1]

Not much is known regarding early life of Ramanand. Even his date of birth is a controversial subject. According to Bhandarkar[2] and Grierson, he was born in A.D. 1299. But MaCauliffe[3] assigns A.D. 1398 as his date of birth. Farauhar[4] also agrees with him. The modern researches have definitely proved that he was born at the end of the fourteenth rather than that of thirteenth century. However, his main career lay in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Ramanand was born at Allahabad in the family of Kanya-Kubja Brahman. He was educated partly at Allahabad and partly at Benaras. His first teacher was a Vedantist of the monist school. But later he became a desciple of Raghava Nanda, who belonged to the Sri Sampradaya of Ramanuja. Ramanand travelled widely and studied deeply. At Varanasi he joined in philosophical discussions with learned Muslims and Brahmans. It was there that he passed most of his years, teaching and preaching. As a result of his experiences he made a bold departure from the doctrines of the school to which he belonged. In theological belief, he substituted worship of Rama for that of Vishnu and his consort and in social sphere he threw open the portals of his ashrams to the people of all castes.

Rama was no Nirgun but an incarnation of God an ideally perfect being, Maryada Purshotam. He taught the doctrine of Bhakti to all the four castes without prejudice. He rejected the regulations of Ramanuja with regard to prep aration and par-taking of the meals and admitted to his new sect disciples from all castes, from both sexes and even from among the Muslims. Thus although born and bred in the old conservative Brahmanical atmosphere, he broke the shackles of orthodoxy and admitted into his new sect of Bhakti all men without discrimination.

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1. Tarachand : Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 143.
2. Bhandarkar : Vaishnavism and Shaivism.
3. MaCauliffe : The Sikh Religion, vol. VI.
4. Farauhar : Outline of the Religious literature of India, p. 323.

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Of the numerous disciples of Ramanand, a dozen disciples became famous. They were, Kabir, Bhava Nanda, Atma Nanda, Sursura, Padmavati, Narhari, Rai Das, Dhanna, Pipa, Sain, Sukha and the wife of Sursura.

Ramanand's teachings gave rise to two schools of religious thoughts—one conservative and the other radical. The first remained true to ancient beliefs and allowed only slight changes in doctrines and rites; the other struck out a more independent path and attempted to create a religion acceptable to men of different creeds especially Hindus and Muslims. To the first school, belonged Tulsidas who according to Doctor Tara Chand is unrivalled as the saintly singer of Rama's Bhakti and combined profound philosophy with potent, yet chaste and ethical emotion To the second school, belonged Kabir who was also a unique genius who had a profound effect on the Bhakti movement.

CHAITANYA—Vaishnavism at its Acme (1486-1534 A.D.)

Chaitanya was born in March 1486 in Nadia to Brahman parents, Jagan Nath Misra and his wife Sachi Devi. Chaitanya shaped well as a boy and was renowned for his love of learning. At eighteen, he was married and settled down as a teacher in a tol (school) established by himself on the banks of the Bhagirthi. Soon, he left his school and was initiated into Bhakti cult by a Vaishnav devotee named Ishwar Puri.

At the age of twenty-three, he began to be called as Chaitanya which means, 'awakened intellect or soul'. Two years after, he took to sannyas and started a round of travels to spread the Bhakti faith. He first went to the shrine of Jagannath at Puri and thence for six years he went round all over India preaching Vaishnavite Bhakti. In the north, he went upto Vrindavan, passing through Varanasi and Prayag and in the south upto Rameshwaram. During these travels, he met Guru Nanak at Puri and Muslim saints and was much impressed by their spirituality and democratic tendencies. He passed the last eighteen years of life at Puri.

Chaitanya's leading principle is Bhakti or devotion. In relation to God, a Bhakta passes through five successive stages in his goal of salvation. The first is resigned contemplation; the second *Dasya* or service to Him. In the third stage, the devotees develop friendship. The fourth stage is that of love like that of a child for its parents. This last stage is that of earnest and all-engrossing love of a woman for her lover.

By salvation, Chaitanya means union with Him, who is possessed by attributes which are best manifested in the charming personality of Sri Krishna. Chaitanya's God is a

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personal being, full of grace and love for His creation and endowed with qualities of un-equalled excellence. Self-surrender to Him (Prapatti) is very essential for a Bhakta to achieve salvation. In the ideas of Chaitanya, Bhakti and love are best exemplified and illustrated by the mutual love of Radha and Krishna. By doing this, Chaitanya meant to find Aropa out of Roopa [(Radha and Svarupa (Krishna)], but it contained the possibility of mistaking this high type of love for ordinary sexual love. And certainly this thing happened shortly after the death of Chaitanya.

Like Ramanuja and other Bhakti thinkers Chaitanya assigns to Guru a prominent place in the life of a devotee. "If a creature adores Krishna and seeks his Guru, he is released from meshes of illusion and attains to Krishna's feet."[1] He condemns the ritualistic system of the Brahmans and denounces all distinctions of caste,[2] and that all men were competent to reform this worship irrespective of caste and creed. Although he did not encourage ascetism or renunciation and at times advised some of the persons to adopt householder's life, yet he regarded ascetism as the most precious thing to be deserved only by very few. He did not like his followers to be indiscreet in the matter of sex.

Chaitanya was not cynical about the world. Existence to him was not Maya. In existence, there was no misery, there was definite and positive joy. World is the play (Lila) and the playground of God. Each and every devotee has a place in the Lila. Viewed from this angle, the world is an abode of His play and we are participants in His Divine Lila.[3]

From the above it is clear that whatever Chaitanya taught was simple and against the glaring social evils of the people. By doing this, he contributed much to the regeneration of the Bengali people.

Chaitanya's greatness lies in the fact that he focussed the ferment[4] that was produced by the simple faith and the democratic ideals of Islam and the society, tired of Brahmanical ascendancy and aspiring for luring a free life,

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1. Jadu Nath Sarkar : Chaitanya, p. 226, Calcutta, 1932.
2. Chaitanya had disciples from the lowest strata of Hindu society and among Musalmans too. Three of his disciples were Rup, Sanatan, and Harj Das.
3. Lal K. S. : Twilight of the Sultanate, p. 310.
4. Tara Chand : Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 218.

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unencumbered by the manifold meaningless rituals and ceremonies.[1]

BHAKTAS OF NIRGUNA SAMPARDAYA—SAINTS

KABIR (1492—1518 A.D.)

Kabir's life is shrouded in obscurity. Different scholars give different dates of his birth and his death. Yet A.D. 1425 as the year of his birth and A.D. 1492[2] or 1518 as that of his death may be taken to be quite probable.

Kabir's parents were a Muslim couple of the weaver class, Niru and his wife Nima. According to a popular legend he was the natural child of a Brahman widow who, to hide her shame, left him near the tank and the weaver couple adopted him. According to Dr. K.S. Lal such a story might be spicy but there is probably no truth in it. That he was brought as a Muslim and grew in the Hindu environmentf o Varanasi are facts which are generally accepted.[3]

Kabir does not seem to have received any formal education, perhaps he even did not know to read and write; but he possessed an inquiring mind. Living at Varanasi he became conversant with the religious literature of the Hindus. He also knew quite a lot about Islam and Muslim Sufism. According to Dr. Tara Chand, he spent comfortable time in the company of Muslim Sufis and no wonder, Kabir's Bijak contains two hundred Arabic and Persian words after the true manners of Sufis.[4] Furthermore, he drew upon the expressions of Sadhus and other great Muslim mystics.

At the age of eighteen, he became the disciple of Ramanand. Kabir himself says, "I was revealed in Kasi and was awakened by Ramanand who initiated him in the know-

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1. The powers of the Brahmans had become oppressive. The rules of caste became more and more strong as Kubhism was stereo-typed. While better ideals in religion were upheld by the Brahmans, the gap between man and man was widened by caste restrictions. The lower strata of society groaned under the autocracy of the higher, who shut the portals of learning against the inferior classes. They were also debarred from having any access to the higher life and the religion of the new school became the monopoly of the Brahmans as it were the commodity of the market place.
(D.C. Sen, Hinduism through the ages, p. 226.)
2. Sant Vani Sangrah I gives A.D. 1518 and Sita Rai Saran Bhagwan Das (Bhakat Mala p. 474) gives A.D. 1492.
3. Lal K.S. : Twilight of the Sultanate, p. 274.
4. Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 147.

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ledge of Hindu philosophy and his own Bhakti idealogy."[1] Although he drank deep on the fountain of Hindu religious thought and that of Islam, yet none could make him a partisan of either; he developed his independent ideas, condemning wrong practices of both. "Hindus call upon Rama, the Muslims Rahiman, yet both fight and kill each other. Muslims out of their short-sightedness were offended, and they tried to harm him by all the means which priest-craft with its vested interests has employed in all the ages. But he was certainly not a Vaishnavite. In him for the first time, one sees a clear picture of the Saint synthesis in its quintessence which Guru Nanak seemed to have inherited.

The basis of his teachings was neither Quran nor Puran nor any other traditional authority but his own religious experience. He asked the Muslims to give up their blind trust in one prophet and his book. So was his advice to the Hindus not to have blind faith in the authority of Vedas.

NAMDEV

Namdev is one of the most important saints of that school of Bhakti which centres round the worship of Krishna and Rukmani. Jananeshwar was the founder of this school and forerunner of Namdev, Eknath and Tuka Ram, Jananeshwar's greatest work is Jnanshvari, an elaborate paraphrase in Marathi verse of Bhagwad-Gita. Through it, he assigns a very high place to Bhakti and gives 'Vithal' or 'Vithoba' as the name of Krishna. Though Jananeshwar had a tremendous influence on the language and thought of Maharashtra, yet the first of the saintly array of men who changed faith of the country and turned the minds of men from the priest-ridden ceremonial of a narrow creed to freedom and love was Namdev.

Born at Narsi Thamani in 1270[2] to poor parents who had tailoring as their profession. Namdev grew to be a passionate Bhakta of Vithal or Vithoba. According to Dr. Tara Chand, Vithoba was a symbol and a convention but not an idol and thus the characteristics of the Krishnite religion of devotion in Maharashtra were hardly distinguishable from those of radical reformers of the north.[3]

Namdev was definitely hostile to idol worship. He received the following instructions from his Guru, named Khechar :

> "A stone-god never speaks, what possibility then of his removing the disease of mundane existance. A stone

1. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
2. Bhandarkar assigns the date of birth in the fourteenth century.
3. Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 221.

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image is regarded as God, but the true God is wholly different. If a stone-god fulfils desires, how is it he breaks when struck....."[1]

To Namdev the aim of Bhakti seems to achieve eternal Bliss where "all the sound of the world will straight-away cease, and all unending now shall be the reign of peace."[2]

"Vows, fasts, and austerities are not all necessary; nor is it necessary for you to go on pilgrimage. Be you watchful in your hearts and always sing the Name of Hari. It is not necessary to give up taking food or drinking water : fix your mind on the feet of Hari".[3]

Yoga or sacrificial ceremonies or giving up objects of desire is not wanted. Realise a fondness for the feet of Hari.

Besides this, Namdev stood for the elevation of the status of women, religious preaching through the language of the people and sanctification of family life. He condemned caste system very trenchently and preached complete social harmony on the basis of social equality.

After Namdev, a goodly host carried forward the traditions which he handed over to them. Among them were a few women, a few Muslim converts to Hinduism and nearly half of them were Brahmins; the remaining being men drawn from all other castes: "Maratha, Kunbi, Jailors, Gardners, Potters, slave girls, even the outcaste Mahars."[4]

SIGNIFICANCE OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Wide-spread Move-ment

The Bhakti cult was a widespread movement which embraced the whole country. It was a movement of the people and aroused interest among them. Perhaps, after the decline of Buddhism, there had never been a more wide-spread and popular movement in our country than the Bhakti movement. It affected India in ways more than one.

Golden Period of the growth of Verna-culars

Almost all the exponents and protagonists of Bhakti movement gave their instructions in the mother-tongue of the people, and as a result became responsible for the enrich-ment of literatures of the languages of the people. According to Dr. A.L. Vastav, the period of Bhakti movement proved, a golden period in the history of the growth of our vernaculars

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1. Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 221.
2. Refer to Hymns of the Maratha saints by Macnicoll, p. 47.
3. Bhandarkar : Vaishnavism and Shaivism, p. 90.
4. Ranade : Rise of the Maratha power, p. 146.

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literatures.[1] The lyrics of Vidyapati and songs of Miran Bai, Tukaram's Abhangas, Kabir's Bijak, Dadu's Bani, Nabha Das's Bhaktmala, the works of Surdas, the Ramayana of Tulsidas, bear abundant testimony to this fact. In Panjab, Panjabi language began to assume the role of media of literary expression. Farid's and Guru Nanak's compositions are some of the illustrations to prove the vivacity of this point. Adi Granth, the sacred book of the Sikhs, is the epitome of the effervescence of literary acitvities that the vernacular[2] literature witnessed under the impact of the Bhakti movement.

Harmony

Bhakti cult, especially under the directions of Kabir and Nanak, was responsible for creating a climate wherein both Hindus and Muslims could live harmoniously. Kabir asked both Hindus and Musalmans to give up their respective exclusiveness, caste and religious pride. According to Dr. Tara Chand, Kabir proclaimed a religion of the centre, 'a middle path'. His cry was taken up all over India and was re-echoed from a hundred places. Akbar, estimating its value attempted to make it a religion approved by the State. Thus 'Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi was not an isolated freak of an autocrat who had more power than he knew how to employ, but an inevitable result of the forces which were deeply surging in India's breast, and finding expression in the teachings of men like Kabir.'[3]

The Religion of the Centre

Fostered Liberal Tendencies

Though the experiment of Akbar at political level failed and was not pursued after the death of Akbar, yet it initiated process and fostered liberal tendencies. It, at any rate, blunted the sharpness of communalism. It issued forth liberal ramifications. In the Punjab a liberal movement in the form of Sikh religion which had sprung under the direction of Guru Nanak received strength. Many Muslims developed respect for the Hindus as so many Hindus respected the Muslims. Although in the initial stages, the meeting places were either Sufi Khankahs or Sikh Ashrams; yet a good beginning had been made.

Evolution of Hindu-Muslim Culture

Bhakti movement affected the course of history in another way, under its impact, a new culture began to develop, the culture which was neither exclusively Hindu nor purely Muslim. It should be given the name of Hindustani culture. Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Muslim elements but the very

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1. Sultanate of Delhi, p. 384.
2. The word 'Vernacular' gained currency in the days of the British Raj. It means slave language and thus it is a misnomer and implies insult to Indian languages.
3. Tara Chand : Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 165.

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spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind began to alter. The Muslims also reciprocated by responding to the change in every department of life.

The religious leaders in Maharashtra, Gujrat, the Punjab, Hindustan and Bengal from 14th century onwards deliberately rejected certain elements of ancient creeds and emphasized others and thus made attempts to bring about an approximation between the Hindus and Muslims. At the same time, Muslim Sufi orders and Muslim writers and poets showed a strong tendency to assimilate Hindu practices and doctrines in some cases going so far as to adopt even the adoration of Hindu Gods.

As a result of this and other factors—neighbourliness and the economic and social needs—other spheres of society also began to reflect the Bhakti spirit. The effect of Bhakti Movement on customs, intimate details of domestic life, fashions of dress, the ways of cooking, the ceremonies of marriage, the celebration of festivals and fairs and on the courtly institutions of the Indian princes was so vivid that it needs no elaborate discussion. It was certainly under this influence of the movement that in the days of Babar, the Hindus and the Muslims lived and thought so much alike that he was forced to notice their peculiar 'Hindustani way'.[1]

In this liberal atmosphere, the Hindus and the Muslims started give and take process in the sphere of science, astronomy and medicines. The Arabs borrowed from Greece a great deal and on the combined basis of Hindu and Greek ideas built up original structures of their own. When, the Muslims came to India, they brought with them their own scientific system which possessed several novel features.

Effect on Painting, Architecture and Literature

The effect of Bhakti movement was nowhere more evident than on architecture, painting and literature. The Hindu buildings such as palaces and temples etc. were no longer built on the lines of the pure styles of the preceding period. They not only employed the Muslim elements of architecture but also they breathed a fresh spirit which demonstrated how much the ancient aesthetic values had undergone change. Similarly, the Muslims also adopted various elements of Ancient Hindu style and technique of raising buildings, and in this way, evolved a new style in India, rather a number of new styles. As a matter of fact, the Indian architecture of the period exhibited a unique 'synthetic tendency', and it appeared that architectural

1. Beveridge : Babarnama.

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schools of the period whether Hindu or Muslim, were really two branches of the same tree.

Paintings

So was the case with the paintings of this period. And in fact here, even more than in architecture, one thing i.e. to say aesthetics governed the form. The difference between the style of Ajanta and that of Delhi was great—line, colour and rhythm were different. But the difference between the styles of Delhi and Jaipur is just the difference between two individual artists of same school. The influence of central Asian or Persian art is evident; but Indian art whether produced in the courts of the Moghul Empire and *nawabs* or those of Hindu princes of Rajputana or Tanjore does not imitate slavishly the foreign models. It has an individuality of its own, and it can only be described by the term 'Muslim-Hindu art.'[1]

Literature

In literature too, Bhakti Movement had its profound effect. Sanskrit ceased to provide the medium for the most vital needs of the people. Almost all the Bhakti reformers gave their message in the languages of the people with the result that the rich literature grew in different languages. Hindi in the North, Marathi in the Maharashtra, Bengali in the East, Panjabi in the West, Tamil in the South, developed into literary languages. The Hindus and the Muslims alike shared in the glory of their achievements.

Linguistic Synthesis —Urdu

Above all, a new linguistic synthesis took place. The Muslims modified their Turkish and Persian and thus evolved a new literary medium—the Urdu. Both Muslims and Hindus adopted it as their own; and a unique phenomenon occurred. Hindi, Bhaktas began to be employed for one kind of literary expression, the Urdu for another; and thus whenever the creative impulse of the Muslim or the Hindu ran in one channel, he used Hindi and when it dived him into the other, he used Urdu.[2]

Politics : Honey-combed the bitterness-ridden politics of Medieval India

Politics also could not escape the effects of Bhakti Movement. The champions of the Bhakti movement, though their message was love and harmony, honey-combed the bitterness-ridden politics of Medieval India. Some of them, as for instance Guru Nanak and Ram Dass Samrath even condemned the contemporary political apparatus. Guru Nanak unreservedly attacked falsehood, hypocricy and corruption of the kings and their nobles and advised the king to be '*Sacha Padshah*', true king, always ready to grapple with the tyrants in the interest of the welfare of the people. Such persons inspired a group of people who were animated to translate into practice

1. Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
2. Dr. Tara Chand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, p. 139.

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the adeals of harmony and humanism. This group emerged as a force in Maharashtra and the Panjab. Any ruler following the policies running counter to their ideas was anaethema for them and no wonder, they rose in revolt against the bigoted rule of Aurangzeb and his successors thereby blunting the edge of oppression of the ruling class. Besides this, they made a positive contribution as well. Ram Dass Samrath worked in concert with Shivaji and exercised a tremendous influence on the Bhakti Movement. Moreover, the spirit of Bhakti Movement created conscious public opinion against the unjust and discriminatory policies of the state or ruling classes.

Helped to foster new political ideals and ideas

The movement affected the course of politics in another way. It contributed a lot towards building a new political psych. The Pre-Muslim India was feudally particularistic; each small tribe cherished its autonomy and acknowledged grudgingly the suzerainty of the Emperor. The state was a kind of feudal heirarchy of chiefs of tribes and clans of province, district and village, and suffered from all the evils of such a system Muslim domination broke up the far too many centres of independent power, and in this way contributed a lot towards creating the sense of larger allegiance. But the aforesaid political process could touch only the fringe of problem. To expand the outlook of the people and to end the deep-rooted parochial allegiances, Herculean effort was needed. The credit goes to the Bhaktas who by laying emphasis on oneness of God and social equality strove hard to broaden the outlook of the people with the result that the feaudalistic political plane also began to shed off particularistic and parochial prejudices. This attitude certainly helped in the growth of new political ideals and ideas.

Reformed Hindu Society and Religion

Bhaki Movement, except under the direction of Nanak and his successors, (who wanted to establish a separate religious system) was, more or less, a movement which aimed at reforming Hinduism. It effected reforms of considerable importance. It brought about the simplication of worship and liberalisation of the traditional caste rules for the time being at any rate. It threw up new religious texts. The high and the low among the Hindu public forgot many of their prejudices and started believing in the message of the reformers that all people were equal in the eyes of God and that birth was no bar to salvation.

BHAKTI MOVEMENT AND REFORMATION MOVEMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE

The European Reformers of the sixteenth century protested strongly against the authority enjoyed by the priests of the

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clergy with the Roman Bishop at their head. The clergy and Pope represented a tradition of authority which had come down from the remote past and had done singular service in its own time in humanising and civilising the barbarian conquerors who devastated the Roman provinces. In course of time, the priests, instead of being the servants, claimed to be masters and rulers, and acquired both temporal and spiritual powers, as also the position of intermediaries between God and Man. Thus intoxicated by the power, they became profligate, immoral and began to feed themselves on their exploitation of the credulous people. These abuses assumed to the extent that Luthar rebelled against the authority which issued indulgences and levied Pater's Pence, not as charity, but as a task to subserve the temporal power of Pope and papal heirarchy.

The Bhakti Movment had its counterpart in this respect. Ancient authority and tradition which vested with the Brahmin castes was roundly attacked. The espousers of Bhakti Movement asserted the dignity of human soul which resided quite independently of the accident of birth and social rank.

The European reformers protested against the institutions of monastic orders, celebacy of the clergy and the unnatural retirement of women into the monastries to become nuns. There was a counterpart of this same protest in the way in which our saints and prophets raised their voice against self-mortification, fasts, and meaningless penances and endless pilgrimages. The same spirit prompted the Bhakti reformers to condemn austerities practised by various religious orders, as for instance, Sannyasis and Yogis.

The most important achievment of the European Reformers was the libration of the national intellect from the thraldom of scholastic learning and the oppressive preponderance of the classical Latin in which all the best works were till then written. The Bible was, for the first time, made accessible to all, high and low, rich and poor and the monopoly of learning till then, enjoyed by the priests was shaken to its foundations.

In India too, the process of liberation moved on the same lines. Much to the surprise of the professors of Sanskrit, the reformers of Bhakti Movement started addressing the people, both in speech and writing, in their own vernacular, and boldly opened the hitherto hidden treasures to all men and women alike. It is true that Vedas and the Shastras were not translated into different languages of the people as the Bible was; but there is a sufficient reason for that. The Bhaktas knew fully well that, after the Budhistic Revolution, the appeal of Vedas and Shastras was far less than

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that of Ramayana, Mahabharta, the Gita and Bhagwata Purana and hence these later works were translated.

The Protestant reformers in Europe achieved another change of great importance. They succeeded in ending the image-worship. All this was done with iconoclastic spirit. The Bhakti Reformers also raised the protest but it did not assume the iconoclastic form which the Protestants adopted in their own countries. As a matter of fact, the iconoclastic spirit was never characteristic of our country and all the various forms in which God was worshipped were believed to merge finally into one Supreme Providence or Brahma—this tendency of national mind being as old as the Aryan civilization. Even in Vedic times, although Indra, Varuna and Sudra were separately invoked for blessings of various types, they were regarded interchangeable forms of the one Supreme Lord. This tendency explains as to why the saints and prophets of Bhakti Movement did not treat the question of image worship with iconoclastic spirit.

There was another point of difference between the two movements. Bhakti movement was socio-religious, even political, surely in the Punjab and Maharashtra. It embodied in itself certain specific social ideas and values; it stood for social harmony of different classes and creeds in the country. In its poltitical aspect, it stood for broad-based and liberal political set-up and it is on record that Bhaktas worked in concert with some political leaders.[1]

European Movement, on the other hand, was a movement of reform in respect of Christian Church. It had no new social or political aims. And if there was any such aim, that was the overtone of the protest and certainly did not form the basis or the content of the movement.

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1. Ram Dass Samrath was the adviser of Shivaji.

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Creative Response

BIRTH OF SIKHISM

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Chapter 5

GURU NANAK DEV

(b. A.D. 1469; d. A.D. 1539)

He was born in April 15[1], 1469 in Rai Bhoe Ki Talwandi[2], now known as Nankana Sahib in the Sheikhupura District of West Pakistan His father Mehta Kalu, was a Patwari – rank which was fairly high in the revenue department in old times. His mother's name was Tripata, and he had an elder sister, named Nanki, four years senior to him.

Education (a controversial point)

When he grew to be five, he, like many children, was sent to an elementary school run by a Pandit Gopal of his village. Shortly after, the boy discovered his teacher's inability to give him the real knowledge into the nature of the things. Henceforward, he became indifferent to his lessons. After this, Nanak attended Brij Nath's school[3] for two years and it can safely be presumed that Nanak soon got initiated into Vedas and six systems of philosophy. Even here, Nanak was not completely satisfied. Then he was sent to Mohammedan teacher at the suggestion of Rai Bular who loved Nanak tenderly and wanted him to learn Persian and Arabic to get some good post in some department of the government. The Siar-ul-Mutakhrin (1-110) states that Nanak carefully educated by some Saiyyad Hassan[4] who made him well-versed in the most approved[5] writings of the Muslims. According to Malcolm (P-14) Nanak is said to have learnt all earthly scenes from Khizr—the Prophet Elias. The ordinary Muslim accounts also represent Nanak as a prodigious child who

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1. For full discussion see Appendix.
2. There were many villages of this name in the Punjab and hence it was named 'Talwandi' 'Rai Bhoe Ki' to distinguish it from other Talwandis. Sometimes between 1421 and 1434 Rai Bhoe managed to obtain a large number of villages from Mubarak Shah the second rule of Sayyed dynasty and on the ruined site raised this habitation. He chose to make it his own permanent abode.
3. According to Bhai Mani Singh's Janamsakhi, this name is given. No others Janamsakhi supports it.
4. Bhai Mani Singh's Janamsakhi mentions that Guau Nanak was sent to mulla, named Qutab Din.
5. It is stated in Valayat Wali Janamsakhi as well in Meharban Wail Janamsakhi that the Guru learnt 'Turki' or Musalmani.

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would astonish his teacher, like Christ[1], by asking him the hidden import of the first letter of the Alphabet. "There is reason to believe" says Cunningham, "that in his youth he made himself familiar with the popular creeds both of the Mohammadans and the Hindus and that he gained a general knowledge of the Kuran and the Brahmanical Shastras." A close study of Guru Nanak's 'vani' in Guru Granth Sahib leaves no doubt that the Guru was well-versed in the religious lore of his time; and such intimate knowledge as Guru Nanak shows in his composition could only be acquired through stupendous efforts and not merely through free intercourse with people professing different faiths.

Unfortunately, the absence of reliable source-material has sparked off a controversy as to whether the Guru acquired education or chose to be ignorant. The sikh biographers assert that the Guru was sent to the village schools but he did not read anything in them. They regard it something derogatory to spiritual dignity of Guru to learn like ordinary men. The Arya Samajists, on the other hand, hold that the Guru rejected the authority of Vedas, because being uneducated, he could not have understood them. Both the views are incorrect. All the Janamsakhis are unanimous in their opinion that the Guru was sent to some schools. The view that Guru Nank was uneducated is also unfounded because no uneducated person could have produced literary compositions of a high order as he did. In fact, having received the elementary education in his schools, Nank took to private study, spent much time in meditation and in association with religious men. He wandered in the dense forests around his home and there doubtless met the religious teachers, reformers of his day, ascetics and wandering faqirs of every kind. From them, he must have learnt the subtleties associated with religious controversy. It is possible that he acquired knowledge from books and persons, but so far as the realization of truth was concerned, that he gained from his own-undisturbed communion with nature, his own soul and with his creator[2].

Investiture of Janaeu

At nine, he was required, by custom, to invest himself with the sacred thread '*Janaeu*', as the Hindus would call it, but he refused to do so saying that he would rather have a thread that would neither break, nor get soiled nor be

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1. Christ, before he was twelve years old perplexed his instructors and explained to them the mystical significance of the alphabetical characters. (Strauss Life of Jesus, 1-272).

2. Cf. Living Religious and Modern Thought by Vidgery, p. 97.

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burnt or lost. The Guru's views in respect of this custom are as under :—

"Out of the cotton of compassion
Spin the thread of contentment
Tie knots of continence, give it the twist of birth
Make such a sacred thread for the mind.
Such a thread once worn will never break
Nor get soiled burnt or lost,
The man who wearth such a thread is blessed
Thou buyest a thread for a pice
And seated in a plastered square
Putteth it round the neck of others
Claiming an inheritance of holiness.
Thy thread helps neither here nor hereafter
The wearer dieth and leaves it behind"[1].

Mehta Kalu was immensely distressed to see his son lost in certain problems. His mind was so fixed on God that for some time he would do nothing but sing His praise and meditate on His name. His father, in order to take him out of this mood, tried him in various professions but failed. According to the Janamsakhis, he was sent to herd the buffaloes, but instead of looking after the herd he would look after his own inward struggle. Next, he tried him on land but there too, Nank did not apply his mind.

True Bargain

At last he put him to trade. He was sent to *Chuharkana*, a neighbouring town, with a sum of twenty rupees to buy goods of common use and sell them at profit. On the way, he came across a group of faqirs who had been hungry for several days. Guru Nanak spent the money in feeding them. He considered it a profitable business or *Sacha Sauda* (True Bargain) and returned home. His father flew into rage and gave him a slap on his face. All this failed to have any effect on the Guru and he showed complete disinclination to engage himself in ordinary secular work and passed more and more of his time in meditation possibly to understand the problems of the people.

Marriage

At the age of 16[2] his father, Kalu married him to

1. Var Asa M. 1, 15 (471).

2. The date of the marriage is different in all the three Janamsakhis. According to Valait Wali Janamsakhi Nanak was married at the age of 12 years while according to Meharban Wali Janamsakhi and Bhai Mani Singh Wali Janamsakhi he was married at the age of 16 and 14 years respectively. Bhai Bala Janamsakhi, however, states that he was in his 18th year when he was married. Since in all three versions, the age at the time of marriage is more than 14 years, it can safely be presumed that he was married at the age of 15-16 years.

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Sulakhni[1] the daughter of Mula, a resident of Batala in Gurdaspur District. The marriage was performed at Talwandi and not at Sultanpur[2]. Kalu's main object was to turn his mind from what he called other-worldiness. In course of time, he begot two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das.

In charge of Granary

The responsibilities of marriage did not divest him of his pre-occupation with matters pertaining to his mission. His uncle, Laloo, also persuaded Nanak to attend to his duties, but he too failed to bring about any change in his mind. As a matter of fact, his concept of duty was not to serve the self rather to transcend it so that the self might participate in the divine scheme of things and spiritualise the world around him. At last Kalu decided to send him to Sultanpur where Nanak's brother-in-law Jai Ram was employed as a steward by Daulat Khan[3] who held a position of some standing in the Punjab. Jai Ram secured a respectable post for Nanak whom he presented as an educated man. Nanak was put in charge of state granary where the corn was collected as a part of land revenue and later distributed under the

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1. The name of the wife of Guru Nanak is given Ghummi in Meharban Wali Janamsakhi and Sulakhni in Bala Janamsakhi It is possible that she might be remembered in her father's house as Ghummi and in her law's house as Sulakhni.

2. In Bhal Bala Janamsakhi it is stated that the marriage took place at Sultanpur which does not sound correct because of the very strong custom prevalent among the Khatries that they would not marry their sons in their daughters' houses. Moreover, the author of 'Nanak Bans Prakash' emphatically states that the marriage of Nanak took place at Talwandi.

3. Daulat Khan was the son of Tatar Khan who held the country north of the Sutlej and Sarhind and this would mean a connection with Punjab administration prior to his becoming Governor. Apart from the Janamsakhis there appears to be no hint of this connection meant in terms of actual responsibility or achievement. Mrs. Banerjee twice states that he was the founder of Sultanpur but this seems to be incorrect. Persian Chroniclers even the Babur Nama are also silent on this point. Moreover, according to the Kapurthala state gazetteer, the town was founded in the eleventh century by Sultan Khan Lodi, a general of Sultan Mehmood of Ghazni. The most we can accept concerning Daulat Khan's life prior to his governorship of Lahore is that his relationship to Tatar Khan must have meant a position of some standing in the Punjab. Daulat Khan was made the governor within the first four years of the sixteenth century. The Tawarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana and the Tarikh-i-Daudi record that shortly before Bahlol Lodhi's death, in 1489, Tatar Khan who had risen in rebellion was defeated and killed by Nizam Khan, the future Sultan Sikandar. Daulat Khan's appointment must have been made after the incumbent governor, Said Khan Sarwani was exiled in A.D. 1500 for his part in conspiracy against Sultan Sikandar in 1524 Ibrahim wrote a letter to Daulat Khan in which he stated that twenty years before he was appointed by his father that it is strange that you had invited the Mughals to the Punjab, meaning thereby that the year of appointment was 1504.

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order of the Faujdar. Guru Nanak's age at that time was twenty. Nanak's work as a storekeeper (Modi)[1] exacted praise and removed the wrong impression which his parents had formed about him.

Disappearance

His inward struggle touches its epex when a charge was levelled against him that he was recklessly giving away the grain. The Nawab ordered an inquiry which was conducted with great care. Accounts were scrutinised; grain was re-weighed. The Guru's detractors were surprised when the stores were found full and the account showed a balance in favour of the Guru. The Guru sent in his resignation to his employer and decided to reform the people and show them the way which every house-holder should follow. The Janamsakhis say that early one morning as usual he went to bathe at neighbouring river, known, as Baeen. While bathing, he disappeared and remained as such for three days, during which he was carried away to God's presence and there charged with the task of preaching the divine Name. The Puratan Janamsakhi in their characteristic way, beautifully sums up the

Vision

vision. "He felt that he stood before the throne of the Almighty and received from Him the message af his mission. He then journeyed to the court of the Almighty Father who gave him a goblet brimming with nectar of 'Nam' which the Master drank and the voice of the Lord commanded him thus :—

"Thou art welcome, O Nanak, that hath absorbed thyself in the name. Do go hence now and do the work for which thou wast born.

People of the Kaliyuga have adopted horrible practices and are extremely degraded in mind.

They worship a variety of gods, have forsaken the Name, and are immersed in sin.

Go thou, spread Love and Devotion to the Name, and Thus lighten the burdens of the Earth.

Go thou, and glorify the name of God and destroy hypocrisy."

The facts such as the immersion in the river for three days and interview with God while submerged in it automatically stand rejected because of their supernatural element; but the substance of the story is un-altered. The incident is one which permits a rational interpretation. The whole matter seems to be like this. Guru Nanak went to the neighbouring

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1. Punjab : Past and Present, Nanak Panthis, p. 50.

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area around the rivulet known as Black Baeen[1], which at that time, was thronged with dense forests. He hid himself there for three days—the period which he required to make certain momentous decisions, which was no easy task because the task of reforming the people while they had become addicts to evil ways was fraught with many dangers. He might be whooted, ruffled, beaten or killed; his children might not be able to receive due attention; he might not be able to undergo the strain of the journey to far-off places. Three days during which he kept himself away from the gaze of the people were used by him in deciding upon the course. In this way, this period is marked for culmination of years of searching resulting in the conviction that he had been called to proclaim divine truth to the world which in Guru Nanak's dialectics means the integrating force to unite the people in one Brotherhood dedicated to the constructive and progressive causes.

No Hindu, No Musalman —A fit formulae

After three days, when Nanak re-appeared, he was a changed man. He distributed everything that belonged to him among the poor and the needy and went out of the city to lead a secluded life. He kept silent but whenever he was urged to speak, he only said, 'there is no Hindu, no Musalman'. People could not understand the significance of his words which meant that they are men first and Hindu or Musalman afterwards. Prof. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh say, "It was a fit formulae for the commencement of his mission, which was to reconcile the two warring communities of India into one brotherhood by showing them how they had fallen from their high ideals and had forgotten God—their common father".

Utterances of Nanak created stir

In the atmosphere surcharged with communal frenzy and religious bigotry, the utterances of Nanak could not but create a stir. Some of the persons went so far as to call him 'a mad man'. A few friends of his ascribed all this to his mental derangement and called a doctor to cure him. Nanak laughed at this misconception. The Janamsakhis portray all this beautifully in the following verses:

"Physician, go thy way
My body groans, because my soul is crying
It is not a case for thy medication
It is the case of the Creator,
Who alone can cure it."

The news that the Guru had disappeared and appeared again and also that he had said, "There is no Hindu and no Musalman' reached the Nawab. The Qazi demanded that the

1. The water of this rivulet looks black because of the colour of the soil.

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Guru should be summoned and required to explain his sweeping assertion which bordered on heresy. The Guru went to the Nawab who expressed his surprise on the alleged pronouncement that there is no Hindu or Musalman and asked him to explain whether Qazi was not a true Musalman. The Guru replied that it was difficult indeed to be a true Musalman and explained :—

"He who is firm in his faith
Has a right to be called a Muslim
His acts must accord with his faith in the Prophet
He must clean his heart of his pride and greed
No more troubled by the two impostors—life and death
Resigned to the will of God
Knowing Him as the Doer,
Freed from the domination of the self
Compassionate to all things
Such a one may call himself a Muslim."

[Majh ki var (8) (141)]

It so happened that the time for prayer came. The Nawab asked Guru if he would join them in the prayer, if all the religions were same. The Guru agreed and to make himself clear accompanied his critics to the mosque where Qazi led the prayers. When Namaz was offered and the faithful kneeled, Nanak was observed to remain standing and taking no part in the prayers. On being asked, Nanak told the Qazi and the Nawab, that their prayers were not acceptable to God because while their bodies were bowing, their spirit was occupied with other things, both his and that of the Nawab. The former was thinking of mare which had just given birth to foal, lest it should fall into the well which was in his courtyard and the latter was absorbed in thoughts of horses which his agents were purchasing in Qandhar. Nanak sang his own hymn bringing about clearly his definition of a prayer and of a Musalman. He said :—

"The five period of the day
Are associated with five prayers
And they have five separate names
Their first requirement is truthfulness
The second is to live on lawful earning
The third to give in God's name
The fourth to discipline the mind with right resolution,
And the fifth to praise God
He whose deeds precede the word of prayer
Has a right to call himself a Muslim
They wander into the wilderness of untruth
Who follow the form and ignore the spirit".

[Majh ki var (7) (141)]

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Immediately after this, the Guru left the service of Daulat Khan and undertook long travels to carry out his programme.

Mohsan Fani's view— A Darvesh was the Guru of Nanak— wrong view

Mohsan Fani rejects the events of the Baeen rivulet altogether and states that as chance would have it, a 'Darvesh' reached the spot and it was under his influence that a flame was kindled in the Guru's heart.[1] Mohsan Fani does not quote any authority to support his view. At best his view is heresy. I. B. Bannerjee considers the account more reliable. I. B. Bannerjee has based his conclusion on the inscription found at Baghdad which, according to the learned writer, mentions the name of Murad acting as the Guru of Nanak.

Murad was The Guru— wrong view

He has examined the inscriptions and reached the conclusion that I. B. Bannerjee drew inferences because he interpreted the inscription incorrectly. The correct interpretation of the inscription is as under :—

> "Murad saw the demolished building of Hazrat Rabi-i-Majid, Baba Nanak Faqir Aulia, and rebuilt it with his own hands, so that historic memorial may continue from generation to generation and His murad-i-saeed (the blessed disciple) may obtain heavenly bliss.[2]

Another view— Kabir was the Guru of Nanak

From the above-quoted English version of the inscription, it is obvious that Nanak was not a disciple of Murad. Another note as to the Guru of Guru Nanak has been struck which seems to have been generally repeated by most of the European scholars, though without quoting their source that Guru Nanak was the pupil of Bhagat Kabir.

This view is totally unfounded. The view has been based on the evidence of (i) Meharban Janamsakhi, (ii) Gyan Singh's Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, and (iii) Handaliya's Janamsakhi. According to the evidence of Meharban's Janamsakhi Guru Nanak left for his first missionary tour in A.D. 1506. If he does not take much of time en-route he can reach Benaras (the place of the meeting with Kabir) towards the end of 1506 or in 1507. The generally accepted dates of death of Kabir are A.D. 1492 and A.D. 1498. Kabir as a disciple and contemporary of Ramanand could have lived up the year 1506-1508 A.D. only if we accept the total age of Kabir to be over 150 years which no historian believes. Inner contradiction in the account of Meharban Janamsakhi also convinces us about the hollowness of the view. In another chapter Meharban

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1. Punjab : Past and Present—Nanak Panthis, p. 50.
2. Divine Master, pp. 156-157. Balbir Singh Verma who is a great scholar of Persian, regards the above translation as nearest to the next. Dr. Ganda Singh is also of the same view.

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seriously contradicts himself. According to this source when Guru Nanak reaches Ayudhya, the Bhaktas Jai Dev, Kabir, Ravi Das, Namdev, Trilochan and Sain descend from heaven to pay homage to Guru Nanak. He takes them to be dead and living in heaven and they all descend to the earth in their astral bodies. After describing Guru Nank's discourse with Kabir at Benaras, Meharban takes Guru Nanak to Heaven (*Sach-khand*) and describes a lengthy dialogue between God and Guru Nanak. So in this Janamsakhi, at times, it is difficult to say where history ends and a legend begins.

The evidence furnished by Gyan Singh's is also unsound. His source of information is 'Nanak Parbodh' alleged to be written by Dharam Das, a disciple of Kabir. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh, Dharam Das did not write such a book. Moreover Dharam Das stayed at Benaras for a very short period and it is doutful if ever he was an eye-witness to this episode. The meeting between Nanak and Kabir is described by Gayan Singh as follows :

"So when Guru Nanak set out from Benaras to meet Kabir, the saint left Raghunath Pura where he had gone to see his disciple Bijli Khan to meet Nanak. Both of them met at the village Pusa in the Kartik 1558 BK., October 1501 A.D. They held illuminating spiritual discussion and stayed together for seven days at Pusa." The only source of information on Bijli Khan is the Archaeological Survey of India according to which Bijli Khan was the Nawab of Maghar and a great devotee of the saint. After the death of Kabir, he built a cenotaph at Maghar in 1450 A.D. on which the date of death of Kabir is recorded as A.D. 1448. Obviously, Kabir could not meet Guru Nanak in A.D. 1501.

The third source of evidence i.e., to say Handaliya's Janamsakhi is also equally undependable. This Janamsakhi which according to Dr. Trilochan Singh, is the corrupted form of Bala's Janamsakhi is altogether unreliable firstly because it had been corrupted by Bidhi Chand, descendant of Handal, a disciple and a missionary of Guru Amar Das, and had turned against the Sikhs on being admonished by them when Bidhi Chand married a Muslim woman. The Handaliyas concocted stories to prove that Nanak was a humble sinner compared to Kabir and introduced imaginary dialogues and stories which give impression that Kabir was the Guru of Nanak. Kavi Santokh Singh says, "A descendant of Handal turned out to be Rahu, the evil genius among Gods who was responsible for contaminating Amrita (nectar) of Gods and causing dark spots of eclipse on the moon."[1]

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1. Quoted by Dr. Trilochan Singh in his book Guru Nanak published by Gurdwara Prabandhik Committee, Delhi.

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That Nanak and Kabir never met can also be proved on the basis of postive evidence. Guru Amar Das in one of the verses of Guru Granth Sahib in Sri Rag p. 67 of Guru Granth Sahib says that Kabir was a historical figure. Guru Amar Das utters :—

Namdev the tailor,
Kabir, the weaver
Acquired enlightenment,
From the perfect Guru
They understood the Word
They had knowledge of God
They gave up pride and caste prejudice
Men and angels sing their hymns
Immortal is their spirit.[1]

Thus to Guru Amar Das who was as old as Nanak, Kabir was an historical figure of the past like Namdev. Guru Ram Das is also of the same view.[2]

Guru Arjan in Rag Basant, of Guru Granth Sahib page 1192 says :

"Dhanna served God in child-like innocence,
Trilochan became a Siddha on meeting a Guru,
Beni was enlightened by his Guru.
O mind be thou a servant of God.
Jai Dev renounced all egoism.
Sain, the barbar, was liberated by serving God.
O mind, wander not in wilderness Kabir contemplated Him with single-minded devotion,
Nam Dev remembered God ever in his heart.
Ravi Das worshipped the wonderful Lord.
Guru Nanak was a perfect embodiment of the eternal spirit of God.

From the above hymn Guru Arjan Dev makes two things very clear; firstly all the pre-Nanak Bhaktas namely Jaidev, Kabir, Namdev, Trilochan, Ravi had human gurus from whom they received enlightenment. Secondly Guru Nanak had no human Guru, least of all Kabir, whom Arjan regards a pre-Nanak figure.

Westcot and some other scholars aver that Guru Nanak met Kabir. To prove the veracity of their statement they bring down the dates of birth and death of Kabir to make him the Guru of Nanak and take him completely out of the life-span of Ramanand as the Guru of Kabir. But their view is totally wrong because firstly it contradicts the acknowledged

1. Translation by Dr. Trilochan Singh.
2. Refer to p. 45 of Guru Granth Sahib.

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fact that Kabir was the disciple of Ramanand and secondly, as it has been said earlier Guru Nanak never met him.

From the above account, it is clear that Nanak never met Kabir nor did he adopt him as his Guru.

Nanak's Guru was God himself

As a matter of fact, Nanak's Guru was his own experience or according to Malcolm, 'Nanak's Guru was God Himself.' Thus is the following hymn of Guru Nanak wherein he says that his Guru was 'Parbraham Parmeshwar.'

ਅਪਰੰਪਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪ੍ਰਮੇਸ੍ਵਰ
ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਕ੍ਰਿਪੀਜੀਓ

"Unfathomable is God who acted as Guru of Nanak".

(Sorath M I, p. 599)

NANAK'S TRAVELS

Having realised that the age of ignorance and strife requires the message of truth and peace, Nanak took the momentous decision of spreading it. To do so, he undertook arduous and extensive tours in the North, South, East and West and visited the important centres of the Hindus, Muslims, Budhists and Jains, Sufis, Jogis etc. and met people of different races, different tribes, diverse culture-patterns. His travels covered a period of nearly thirty years.

In his first udasi, he traversed in terms of the modern political geography of India and Pakistan, Haryana, Delhi, Utter Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Madras, Kerala, Mysore, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Pakistan. He also visited Ceylon. He went there from Nagapathinam, and returned via Rameshwaram. The second udasi (tour)[1] took the Guru into the interior of the Himalayan region where he visited the Kangra

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1. In Janamsakhis, the word 'Udasi' has been used for Nanak's travels. The authors of Janamsakhis seem to feel that Nanak withdrew from the world of activities and use the word 'Udasi' for his travels which literally means withdrawing from the world. It is an admitted fact Nanak did not retire from the world and hence the prevalent use of the word 'Udasi' is incorrect. According to the Meharban Wali Janamsakhi three Udasis were undertaken by the Guru. In his first Udasi, the Guru travels the places in the East and in the South of India. In his second Udasi the northward and westward journeys have been combined while in the third Udasi, the Guru visits the places in the Punjab. Puratan Janamsakhi makes mention of five journeys or Udasis. According to it the eastward and southward journeys were covered by two separate Udasis. This Janamsakhi regards the Guru's visit to different places within the Punjab as the fifth Udasi.

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valley, the Spiti table land, Western Tibet, Ladakh, Kashmir and Punjab (Pakistan).

After this, the Guru undertook his third missionary journey to the muslim countries of West Asia wearing the dress of a muslim devotee. Some prominent places connceted with this tour of the Guru were Multan, Uch, Lakhpat, Hinglaj, Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Mashad, Herat, Kandhar, Kabul, Para Chinnar and Gorakh-Hatri (Peshawar).

Besides the place of the visit of the Guru recorded by Janamsakhis or other sources, there may be many more which bear the Guru's association for the reasons that Guru made frequent tours, short and long, through the length and breadth of the area. Even when he settled at Kartarpur, occasional tours were undertaken. In the course of these tours, the Guru generally followed the village routes and thus passed through numerous places which have not been recorded anywhere.

His first Udasi was eastward. According to Meharban the Guru immediately turned east and proceeded to Delhi wherefrom he went to Hardwar. According to the Puratan Janamsakhi before turning east, the Guru went to Tolumba (modern Makhdumpur-West Pakistan) where he met the Sajjan Thug. It was after this that he went to Panipat and Delhi. Bhai Gurdas gives no specific information about it. The Bala Janamsakhi informs us that before leaving the central Punjab the Guru first went to Eminabad and then to Talwandi. Following the general trend of the writers, we may accept the view that the Guru, when he left Sultanpur, straightway marched eastward and Guru's visits to Eminabad and Tolumba came off much later.

After starting from Sultanpur, the first important places visited by Guru Nanak were Korra, Pehoa[1] and Kurukshetra. All these places have old historical gurdwaras keeping green the memory of the Guru's visit to the places.

Kurukshetra

When the Guru visited Kurukshetra, occasion was that of solar eclipse when hordes of people and a large number of Brahmans and saints had gathered there. The object of Nanak's visit was to draw the attention of erring humanity from the

1. Strangely enough no account mentions the Guru visiting these places at this time, although some of them agree that Kurukshetra was visited by the Guru while returning from South. We are however, of the definite opinion that while proceeding towards Panipat and Delhi, Guru Nanak could not have omitted to visit such places as Kurukshetra onthe way, the visits to Pehowa and Kora being necessary corollaries to the visit Kurukshetra.

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unreal, and from external ceremonies to inner purification. The Guru took his seat near the sacred tank and began to cook deer which was presented by a prince (Rai Singh[1]). A great crowd gathered round him, for to them it was a sacrilege which had never been committed before and on such day when Sun God was harassed by his enemies. The Brahmins led by Nanu[2] beseiged him and were ready to club him to death. But the Guru stood up and spoke. His words worked like a magic. The crowd stood spell-bound. The Guru expressed :—

"Fools wrangle about eating meat
They know not the truth nor the way of right action
Or the difference between meat and vegetables and acts that are sinful and those that are sinless.
They, in ancient days, killed rhinoceros.
Hold their noses and forswear flesh and offered its flesh.
In oblation at the sacrificial fire
They, the man eaters, pitiless and cruel.
Is it any good telling the blind who cannot see or act upon what is right."
(*Slok Moh I*)

Panipat

The next place visited was Panipat where the Guru had a meeting with Sheikh Edul Kabir (d. 1540), a successor of Sheikh Sharaf-ud-din Bin Ali Qalandar (d. A.D. 1325), a renowned Sufi of his days. Sheiks Edul Kabir was also known as Sheikh Tahir or Tatihar as the Puratan Janamsakhi has put in.

After Panipat, the Guru visited Delhi and stayed at a place called 'Majnu da Tilla'. This Majnu was pious faqir and wielded considerable influence. The place is on the right bank of river Jamuna and is now marked by a good gurdwara where thousands of devotees throng every year on the occasion of the Baisakhi.

Hardwar

From Delhi, the Guru proceeded to Hardwar.[3] At this place a larger number of Hindus had assembled to wash away their sins by a dip in the sacred water of Ganges. While standing in the river, they were throwing handfuls of water towards East so that it might reach their ancestors. The Guru in order to exhibit the futility of this action entered the water and began to throw water towards the West. This brought about

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1. Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi.
2. Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi.
3. Puratan Janamsakhi makes no mention of this place and states that the Guru straightway went to Banaras, but the account of Meharbna Janamsakhi that the Guru went to Hardwar from Delhi, looks mero plausible.

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him a crowd of pilgrims who questioned him as to what he was doing. He replied that he was watering his newly-sown fields at Kartarpur, 300 miles away from here. They laughed at him and asked him "How can your handfuls of water reach your fields which are nearly 300 miles away ?" The Guru replied, "If his water cannot reach his fields which are 300 miles away on this planet, how would your water reach your ancestors in the world beyond ?"

Joshi Math

After staying for some time at Hardwar, the Guru proceeded to Kotdar and from there onward to Pauri (Srinagar, District Tehri Garhwal). Then the Guru reached Joshi Math via Badri Nath and Kedar Nath. The Guru took the well-known pilgrims route which was perhaps the only link then available between the districts of Tehri-Garhwal and Almora, considering the Guru Nanak's visits to Hardwar Kotdar, Pauri on the one side and Retha Sahib and Gorakhmata on the other, it seems both natural and logical and that the Guru would have made his jouney by this very difficult but well-known old route.[1]

Retha Sahib

From Joshi Math, the route lay through the Antra and Sepula passes to the Kali river, also called the Sarda and then proceeded along this river towards Almora. The Guru probably followed this route and reached a centre of Jogies situated thirty-three miles east of Haldwani. It is said that a wall-nut tree was made to bear sweet wall-nuts by the super-natural power of the Guru. The Gurdwara marking the sacred spot is reverentially called the Retha Sahib.

Ghorakh Mata

From this place, the Guru reached a place, then called Gorakh Mata via Deohaj stream.[2] As its name indicates the place was a seat of Sidh Jogis. Here the Guru had a long discourse with the Jogis on matters of religion and metaphysics. The Guru explicitly told the Jogis that religion did not consist in wearing parched coat or in the blowing of horns. They should live in the world and assume the role of a true guardian of inner values. His message was 'Abid pure in the midst of impurities of the world'. The Jogies were much impressed with the sincerity and description of the 'Word'. Gorakh-

1. Dr. Kirpal Singh—Janamsakhi Prampara.
2. Refer to Dr. Kirpal Singh's Janamsakhi Prampara.

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mata, out of veneration for the Guru is called Nanak Mata[1] now-a-days.[2]

Gola

From Gorakh Mata, the Guru took a southerly route which brought him to Tanda Vanjara. From there, travelling in south-eastern direction, the Guru reached a place of the Hindus in the modern *Lakhimpur* Kheri district.

Ayudhya

Having covered a short distance from Gola, the Guru reached Ayudhya[3], a very old pilgrimage centre of the Hindus being the birth place of Rama.

Prayag

From Ayudhya, the Guru visited Tanda, Sing holi and Nizamabad (District Azamgarh).[4] From Nizamabad the Guru proceeded to Prayag (Allahabad). Puratan Janamsakhi does not refer to it; only Meharban makes a definite mention of it. In our opinion, Meharban is right because his view is supported by the internal evidence of one of Guru's own hymns. Moreover, the Purani Ghusi, a place near the Tribaini Sangam of Prayag has a long-standing local tradition connected with the Guru's stay there. From Ghusi, he proceeded to Benaras by a road which lay along the left bank of the Ganges.

Banaras

From there, Nanak went to Benaras which was said to be the seat of learning and the abode of Shiva. The Guru sat near a famous ghat. His garments were neither of a house-holder nor of a Sanyasi. His Hindu and Muslim companions attracted attention. Janamsakhis state that he had to indulge in long discussions with Pandits and Sanyasis. The Guru brought home to the Pandits that the knowledge of Vedas or of Shastras is useless if what they teach is not practised by them. Would it help a man who has lost his way to gaze at the light without taking the road which the light is destined

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1. Khulasatut Twarikh written by Sujan Rai Bhandari in 1697 A.D. makes mention of it. The revenue records preserved at Gurdwara indicate that the place was hallowed by Guru Nanak. Moreover, the local population worships this Gurdwara as a place of Guru Nanak.
2. Meharban and Bala traditions make no mention of Guru's visit to Gorakhmata; but this omission need not be given much weight because of two reasons viz firstly the visit is strongly entrenched in the Sikh tradition and secondly it is explicitly mentioned in the 1st var of Bhai Gurdas and Puratan Janamsakhi.
3. Puratan and Bala Janamsakhis make no reference to Ayudhia. Only Meharban makes mention of it. We have accepted Meharban version because of the very strong support it has been given by the local tradition. Kahan Singh Nabha refers, to an old historical Gurdwara preserving the memory of the Guru's visit in this place.
4. At this place, a gurdwara marking the visit of the Guru stands.

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to show ? To the Sanyasis, Nanak said :—

"In ignorance they leave their house and then visit the house of others. Having run away from the duties of a house-holder they are lost in the whirlpool of desire. Without meeting a teacher, they wander about and read books whetting the edge of desire."

One of the leading-most Pandits Chatur Das held a long talk with the Guru on the question of idol worship and symbolism.[1] Most of these talks were verified in 'Omkar' a composition in 'Adi Granth'. "The Pandit who was made to realise that God resided in every human heart and could be adored in the form of the holy Name. Chatur Das along-with others became a sikh and did much to spread Sikhism in the locality. The place is now marked with a Gurdwara called Guru ka Bagh.[2]

Gaya

From Benaras the Guru took up the route to Hajipur Patna. On the way, he visited Gaya associated with the name of Lord Buddha, but a strong-hold of Hindu priests who declared that any offerings made at a particular place on the river secured salvation for seven generations for those who had departed from earth. The simple-minded people made huge offerings and the priests used to feed pitries (ancestors) by offering rice balls, lighted up little lamps to illuminate their path in the high heavens. The Guru standing on the banks of the river Sarju suddenly burst into loud laughter. The priests engaged in ceremonies were surprised and angered. They asked him what he was laughing at. Then Guru told them that the futility of the ceremonies and wrong faith are evoking his laughter. The Guru addressed them that who had left this body did not need food nor a glow lamp to see, because when a; material body was no more it could not require material th ngs. If this body could not go to the other side, ob viously it was not possible for any material thing of this earth to reach the other side.

Patna

From Gaya, the Guru reached Hajipur and passed through where later on the modern city of Patna grew-up. When the Guru went there, there were only ruins of the ancient city of Pataliputra except Hajipur situated at the confluence of the Gandak. A Gurdwara now stands to commemorate the memory of the Guru's visit.

From Hajipur, the Guru reached Kantnagar and from this place to the town of Malda, situated at the confluence of the Ganga and Mahanadi. According to the prevalent tradi-

1. Macauliffe—Sikh Religion, Vol. I, p. 61.
2. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh—A short History of Sikhs.

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tion a local merchant of Malda did a great service to the Guru for which he received the Guru's blessings.

Dhubri

The next important place of visit was Dhubri in Assam. Some scholars say that the Guru took the road subsequently known as the Sher Shah Suri's road which led to Sunargam and reached Dacca. We however do not agree with him. In our view 'From this place (Malda) onwards there are two possible routes he could take (i) He could take the road, subsequently called after Sher Shah Suri, leading to Sunargaon, via Murshadabad and reached Dacca, (ii) He could travel north and passing through what we today call North Bihar and North West Bengal and reached the Kamrup town of Dhubri. In all probability, it was the second route which was followed by Guru Nanak. We have our reasons to hold our views. Dhubri where subsequently Guru Tegh Bahadur raised a platform in the hallowed memory of the Guru Nanak's visit was in Assam, the first important place which was visited by Guru Nanak. As this place is and was situated on the right bank of the Brahamputra River, the likelihood is that the Guru arrived there from the west and not from the south, i.e. to say from the side of Dacca. Secondly, for a traveller desiring to tour the region of Assam, as the Guru was, the Dacca route was much longer, circuitous and unnatural. Thirdly, the northerly route is marked by many old historical gurdwaras bearing association with Guru Nanak and Guru Teg Bahadur. Fourthly, when later on Guru Teg Bahadur proceeded to Assam, he too followed the northerly route.

Meeting with Nura

After Dhubri, the Guru proceeded along the Brahamputra river on to Kamrup, a place near the modern town of Gauhati. Janamsakhis say that it was here that the Guru met Nura, head of conjurers by her usual alluring gestures and extraordinary display of tempting charms who tried to cast spell on him. But the Guru, to bring home to her the futility of these things, sang a hymn which had a magical effect on her. She became a changed woman and fell down at the Guru's feet.

The story reads more a fable than a reality. Janamsakhis set this story in *Istri Desh* (country of women). Nura has been mentioned as a chieftain or as a ruler of some area in Kamrup. But according to McLeod, in the contemporary history of Assam or Kamrup, there is no mention of this name.

Dhanpur

But this does not mean that the Guru did not pay visit to Kamrup. The Guru visited Dhanpur in Kamrup and met Vaishnava Saint Shankerdev. A muslim chroniclar Mohammad Kazim who has left a detailed description of Assam testifies

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this account to the existence of a tribe known by the name of Nanak.[1]

After passing through Kamrup, the land of Tantrism which then it was, the Guru entered Asa Desh[2], which was at that time being ruled by Raja Swarg Narain (A.D. 1497-1593), a descendant of Samundar, the first known ancestor of the Ahoms.

Gola Ghat Nagar & Dhana-sari Valley

Continuing his journey upto river Brahmputra, the Guru reached the place called Gola Ghat Nagar, wherefrom he entered Dhanasri[3] valley. In this valley, the Guru had to confront with cannibals who inhabited it in a large number. The story that the Guru met Koda Rakshash is true only to the extent that the Guru met the people of Kodan tribe in this area. Puratan Janamsakhi seems to place Dhanasri valley in Central India and regards the visit of the Guru to it in his second missionary tour to the south; but this does not seem to be correct because there is no Dhanasri valley in Central India.

Gauhati

From Dhanasri valley, the Guru went back to Gauhati by the river route as he had followed during his upward journey. At Gauhati, the Guru changed his route and went

Shillong, Silhet

to Shillong and from that place to Silhet where an old gurdwara stands in token of the memory of the Guru.

Dacca

In the Silhet area, the Guru travelled by boat and come down to Dacca first by Surma and then by Barak River. Dacca, at that time did not enjoy the political importance as it enjoyed later or now. Neither it was the capital of the province, nor was it any trade-centre. It was famous for temple of the Dakeshwari Goddess to whom did it owe its name. The Guru stayed here for some time, and the site which he hallowed is the present day Razabazaar. An old local will is also associated with Guru Nanak.[4]

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1. Mohd. Kazim : Description of Assam. Asiatic Researches Col. 11, page 181. Quoted by Dr. Trilochan Singh in Guru Tegh Bahadur, pp. 242-243.

2. At the time of Guru Nanak, the modern state of Assam had two broad divisions with the Burma, a tributary of the Brahmputra river, as the dividing line between the two. The area to the west of the Burma was called Kamrup and comprised the districts of Goalpara Kamrup, Ganghur, Cooch Bihar. To the last of Burma lay the Asa Desh mainly peopled by the Ahom Tribe, an offshoot of the Shan Tribes.

3. The valley has b en given the name after the name of tributary of the river Brahmputra.

4. There was little knowledge of the visit of the Guru to Dacca till G.B. Singh brought to light some of the local traditions having a bearing on this aspect. Recently, Dr. A.C. Bannerji has raised doubt. He, however, accepts the validity of the visit because apart from the local tradition it finds support in the Bala Janamsakhi.

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From Dacca, the Guru marched to Puri. On the way, he passed through Calcutta[1], and Cuttock[2]. From Cuttock the Guru took the pilgrim's route to reach Puri.

Puri

Jagan Nath Puri where the temple of Jagan Nath, the Lord of the East, stood one of the four most revered temples—others being Som Nath, Badri Nath, Vishva Nath. The Guru visited the temple, not to adore the Lord but to teach the people that the worship of Nam was superior to the worship of the deity. At the appointed time, the priests began to perform *Arti* (sort of Hindu prayer). The Guru did not join the service, which enraged the priests. On being asked the reasons, the Guru sang a hymn of his own, in which he told the people that "a wonderful serenade was being sung by nature before the invisible altar of God. The sun and the moon were the lamps, placed in the slaver of the fermament and the fragrance wafted from the Malayan mountains was serving as incense." There is no need of offering artificial worship to Him.

According to Biman Behari Majumdar who bases his conclusion on Chaitanya Bhagwat[3], Guru Nanak also met the Great Vaishnavite Saint Krishna-Chaitanya in 1510 popularly known as Chaitanya Prabhu. "The two saints seem to have spent some time together, and enjoyed the divine music, kirtan, in which both of them found special pleasure." The other persons who joined the kirtan (Recitation of Word) were Mardana and Ruh, Sanatan (Two brothers) Jagai and Madhai Nagar Purshotam Jangali Nandini, Gopal Guru and Nityananda Prabhu[4]. The presence of a small gurdwara at this place commemorating the Guru's visit is another supporting evidence.

According to Puratan Janamsakhi, the Guru ended his first Udasi with the visit to Puri and returned to the Punjab. It was only after some time that he set out on his second Udasi. The Meharban version does not accept this view and treats the eastern and southern journeys as the constituents of a single Udasi. In our opinion, Meharban's version is more

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1. Tara Singh Narotam : Guru Tirath Sangreh.
2. Bhai Vir Singh : Guru Nanak Chamatkar.
3. Chaitanya Bhagwat makes no mention of the date of its preparation. According to Dr. Prabhat Mukhopadaya, Reader in History, Utkal University, in his article in Bengali in Sahitya Parishad Patrika (Calcutta) in 1943 BS/1736 A.D., Part 11, page 76. The book was written towards the end of the 16th Century. Dr. Bimanbehari Majumdar, however, is of the opinion that it could not have been written before the 17th century. Even in the latter case, the Chaitanya Bhagwat is very reliable source of the life of the great saint and may said to have been based on contemporary or semi-contemporary record.
4. Chaitanya Bhagwat : Adhyaya 61 and Adhyaya 64.

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plausible. The reasons are not far to seek. In the first place, if the Guru returned from Puri he must have visited some important places on the way back, but surprisingly, the Puratan Janamsakhi does not make any mention of it. Secondly, the geographical location of Puri is such that a visitor planning to visit south India would not come to the Punjab first and then start for the southward journey. Since Guru Nanak had a definite plan to visit the south, he must have preferred to start his journey from Puri rather than come back all the way to the Punjab and then start fron here.

Cuttock

The Guru, after a short stay at Puri returned to Cuttock and took the route heading towards Kanchipuram. Enroute, he visited Guntur of the present Andhra State. From here he reached Kanchi Puram a famous Hindu pilgrimage centre, noted for his temples of Shiva and Vishnu.

Tiruch-chirupalli

After this, the Guru reached Tiruvannamalai (Distt. South Arcot). From here, the Guru proceeded the Tiruch-chirupalli and paid a visit to the historic temple of Sri Rangami built on the island formed by the Kaveri and Coleroon rivers.

All these places, Gantur, Kanchipuram, Tiruvannamalai, Tiruchchirupalli have gurdwaras to mark the visit of the Guru.

Visit to Ceylon

From Tiruchchirupalli, the Guru sailed down the Kaveri river and reached Nagapatnam a very old port of south India. From this port, the Guru proceeded to Ceylon and Betticola was the first important place of his stay in the island. Twelve miles south of Betticola, the Guru reached Kurukal Madah which todate, enshrines the memory of the visit of Sikh Baba from northern India.[1]

Betticola

Katargam

Sitawaka

After staying there for some time the Guru started in the southerly direction and reached Katargama, a Hindu Tirath having many sacred traditions associated with Shiva's son, Katargama. Herefrom, the Guru proceeded to Sitawaka (Avisvella of the present day). The latter place is also called Sita Eliya from the tradition of Sita having spent her period of captivity here. At the time of Guru Nanak's visit, this place was in the Kotte kingdom of Raja Dharma Prakarma. The inscription discovered by Dr. Karuna Ratna and Parana Vitana in the famous museum of Anurodh Pura furnishes a brief account of the encounter of Jnanakacharya (Nanak)

Parana-vitana

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1. Dr. Kirpal Singh : Janam Sakhi Parmpara.

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with the Buddhist Bhikshu, Dharma Kirt—sthavira. This inscription also informs that the Raja Dharma Prkrama-bahu had promised to embrace Nanak's creed if he won in the debate. Nanak won. But before he should embrace Nanak's creed, the Brahmins very cleverly got arranged another public debate, this time between Nanak and Dharma Dvaja-pandita and maneouvered the result in favour of the latter. In this way, they did not allow the ruler to fall under the influence of Nanak.

Anurdha-pura

Starting from Kotte, the Guru reached Anurdhapura a capital town of Ceylon in olden times. Continuing his journey he reached the part of Mannar near the modern town of Talaimanner.[1] At Mannar, the Guru left Ceylon and sailed for Rameshwaram wherefrom he proceeded to Trivandrum where there was a famous Hindu temple of Anantapuram. After this, the Guru visited Palam and Kottayam where according to Sikh tradition used to be a gurdwara marking the visit of the Guru. The shrine was situated midway between the two places and was called after both the places by the name of Palam Kottayam Gurdwara.

Palam, Kottayam

Bidar

Then the Guru reached Bidar by taking a northerly route passing through Nilgiri Hills. A historical gurdwara stands at the place of the Guru's sojourn. From Bidar, the Guru reached Nader. After this the Guru's important sojourn was Baroach where a Gurdwara named Nanakwara reminds us of the Guru's visit. According to Dr Fauja Singh this Gurdwara enjoys an old annual jagir of Rs. 75 and this thing undoubtedly points to its historic city. "In the light of this Baroach tradition and in view of his wide travels in the land of Saurashtra, we are of the opinion that from Baroach the Guru journeyed to the area of Gujarat Kathiawar where he visited the temples of Som Nath, and Dwarka. After this he marched to the Girnar Rocks and visited places around it. Meharban's Janamsakhi makes mention of these tribes. A local tradition also preserves memory of the Guru's visit to this place. Junagarh, 10 miles from the Girnar Rocks, was also visited by the Guru. According to a local tradition, there used to be a gurdwara in the name of Guru Nanak. This gurdwara does not exist now."[2]

Nader Baroach

Somnath & Dwarka, Girnar Rocks

Junagarh

Ujjain

From the Girnar Rocks, the Guru reached Ujjain. On the way, he probably passed through Ahmedabad. At Ujjain, the Guru stayed near the famous Bharthari cave of Ujjain and to all probability, must have discussed issues relating to the Jogies

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1. Museum Register, M. 111.
2. Dr. Kirpal Singh : Janam Sakhi Parampara.

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and his own point-of-view. From Ujjain, the Guru reached Ajmer via Chittorgarh. The city was famous for the Dargah of the renowned Chisti Saint Muin-ud-din and for the Pushkar Lake considered to be sacred by the Hindus. From Ajmer, the Guru reached Mathura via Ambar. The city, at the time of Guru Nanak's visit, was a great pilgrimage centre of the Vaishnavite Hindus. According to the Meharban's Janamsakhi, the Guru visited the Keshva temple of Mathura which later on was destroyed by Emperor Aurangzeb as a part of his campaign against the Hindus.

Ajmer

Mathura

From Mathura, the Guru set out for the Punjab.

The Guru's homeward journey from Mathura is not very clear because neither any written record nor any local tradition enlightens us about the route by which the Guru reached the Punjab. The possibility, however, is that the Guru took a slightly southerly route and reached Sirsa. At Sirsa, he stayed with a Muslim faqir outside the town and one of the walls of a house near it still bears the inscription bearing Chilla Baba Nanak. Recently a place has been discovered indicating the Guru's visit to this place.

Sirsa

From Sirsa, the Guru reached Pak Pattan, renowned for the Dargah of the Chisti Saint Farid Ganji Shakar. At the time of the visit of Guru Nanak, Sheikh Brahm (Ibrahim) was on the *gaddi* of Baba Farid. Guru Nanak discussed with him matters relating to his faith. Both of them developed respect for each other. From Pak Pattan the Guru reached Talwandi via Dipalpur.

Pakpattan

Talwandi

NORTHERN UDASI (Second Udasi)

After a brief stay at Talwandi the Guru set out on his second Udasi. The first important place he visited was Lahore. All the Janamsakhis make mention of this visit. From Lahore, the Guru proceeded to Sultanpur to see his sister Nanki visiting Ghawindi, Khalra and Patti on the way.

Lahore

Saltanpur

After short stay at Sultanpur, the Guru passed through the areas of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur and reached the abode of Pir Budhan Shah. At the place where he stayed, Guru Hargobind founded the city of Kirtarpur.

At Kirtarpur, the Guru entered the hilly region and proceeded to Bilaspur, the headquarter of Kahlur Raja. Besides this, the Guru visited Mandi, Rawalsar, Jawalaji and Kangra. From Kangra he marched to Baijnath which was then called Kirgram. Kir was after the name of the tribe 'Kir' that had established its ascendancy in this area. From Baijnath, the Guru, after crossing through Dulchi Pass reached Kulu. From Kulu a route led the Guru into Spiti valley,

Bilaspur, Mandi, Rawalsar, Jawalaji, Kangra

Spiti Valley

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through Hamtu Pass. The Guru stayed in an old village called Mulani. Local tradition confirms this fact. Some relics of the Guru are also reported to have been preserved and worshipped by the people of the village.

Tibet

Mansarovar & Kailash Parbat

Passing through the Sprang or Prang Passes, the Guru was able to enter into Tibet and then proceeded on to the Mansarovar Lake and the Kailash Parbat (Sumer Parbat). While moving through the area, the Guru met some Jogi hermits living in caves. They were astonished to find him there and asked him how things were going in the plains below. In reply to them Nanak said that the moon of truth was completely enshrouded in the darkness of ignorance. Sin had devoured the world which was crying in distress. Jogis have retired to the mountains, and know nothing and were busy in besmearing their bodies with ashes. Who should save the world ? Without a true Guru, it was sunk in ignorance.[1] The Guru tried to convince them that instead of wearing empty forms and doing hard penances, they should exert themselves in the service of mankind.

Images of Nanak in some of the temples

Images of Guru Nanak are said to be present in some of the temples of this area. There is a class of people living in this area who have substituted or added the mantra Om Aham, Bhadra Guru Parm Sidhi Ham for or to the usual Budhist Mantra, Om Mani Padmi Hami and it is these men in whose temple the image of Nanak is given a permanent place.[2]

Ladakh

From the area of the Sumer Parbat, the Guru turned north-west and after passing through Gartok and Rudok entered into Ladakh through the Chasul Pass.

From the Chasul Pass, the Guru came to Upshi and from that place to Karunagar. "A remarkable point about this place is that in its neighbourhood, there are a few villages where none except Guru Nanak is worshipped." At a short distance from Karunagar, there is an old place called *Gumpha Hemus* which keeps the memory of the Guru's visit alive. The people hereat have preserved a stone on which the Guru is believed to have seated himself during the visit. From this, the Guru took the route going along the Indus and reached

Skardu

Skardu. This place has a gurdwara named after Guru Nanak, a fact which testifies the Guru's visit.

Kargal

From Skardu, the Guru reached Kargal wherefrom after passing through Joshila Pass and Baltan Nagar reached the

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1. Bhai Gurdas, Var 1.
2. Sewaram Singh : The Divine Master.

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famous Hindu Tirath Amarnath famous for a temple of Lord Shiva. **Amarnath**

From Amarnath, the Guru reached Pehlgam and then to Matan the site of ruins of the historic temple of Martand. Here a Kashmiri Pandit Brahm Das had a religious discussion with the Guru. The Guru convinced him of the importance of Nam Marg and the futility of the knowledge having no connection with actions. **Pehlgam & Nahan**

From Matan, Guru Nanak visited Anantnag, Srinagar and Baramula. All these places have gurdwaras to mark the visit of the Guru. **Anant Nagar, Srinagar and Bara Mula**

From Baramula the Guru wended his way to Hasan Abdal, popularly known as Panja Sahib. It is said that here the Guru had to encounter a faqir, Wali Qandhari who in a fit of anger rolled down a heavy piece of rock on the head of the Guru which the Guru stopped with the outstretched palm of his hand. It is said that the impression of the Guru's palm was embedded in the stone which can still be seen. The story is not found in any early account and is probably a later addition. **Hasan Abdal**

At Hasan Abdal Guru Nanak decided to go to Talwandi to meet his people. On his home-ward journey he reached Tilla Bal Gudai, a major centre of Sidh Naths. The Guru met an assembly of Sidhs here and had a long religious deputation with them. After this the Guru's important sojourn was Sialkot where a big gurdwara stands in his honour. **Tilla Bal Gudai** **Sialkot**

From Sialkot, the Guru having halted at many places on the way reached Talwandi. The most important places of his stay were Pasrur and Saidpur (modern Eminabad in Gujranwala District, Pakistan). **Talwandi**

WESTERN UDASI (Third Udasi)

After staying for some time at Talwandi, the Guru came to Sultanpur and from there started his journey to the west. During this Udasi, the Guru like a muslim pilgrim, carried a pot for his ablutions, a carpet under one arm and a book under the other. He was also accompanied by his devoted rebeck-player, Mardana. **Sultanpur**

From Sultanpur, the Guru visited Pak Pattan for the second time and met Sheikh Ibrahim Farid II in whose company he always felt great pleasure. **Pak Pattan**

Therefrom he reached Multan, an ancient town of the Punjab. On the way, he passed through Tolumba (modern **Multan**

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Makhdumpur), where he came across a notorious thief named Sajjan. He always dressed himself in pure white, wore the Hindu mark of sanctity on his forehead and displayed a Muslim rosary round his neck. He had built a Hindu temple and Muslim mosque at his gate. He invited way-farers to his residence and then robbed them. He was always in the watch for travellers and when he saw the Guru and his follower, he rejoiced for his victims. He invited them to his house. The Guru accepted the invitation with a sparkle of amusement in his eyes. When night fell, the Guru asked Mardana to play the *Rabab* (a musical instrument) and invited Sajjan to come and listen to his hymns. Sajjan agreed. The Guru sang a hymn. The heart-searching voices of the Guru struck the tender chords of the Sajjan's otherwise stony heart, and no wonder, he was a changed man. 'The criminals' den became a temple for God's worship.[1] It is said that he was the first to build Dharmshala for the spiritual and temporal attainment of all those who sought shelter and Sajjan was entrusted the job of disseminating the Guru's Gospel.

While at Multan the Guru had a meeting with Baha-ud-Din, a descendant and successor of the famous Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Zakria, the founder of Suharwardy Sufi Silsilah in India. This Silsilah was not as liberal as that of Chisti.

Uch

From Multan, the Guru reached Uch and had discussion with Sheikh Haji Abdullah Bukhari (d. 1526 A.D.) a successor of Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari who set up a centre of Sufi faith before the 13th century.

Sakhar

From Uch, the Guru visited Sakhar. From there he travelled to Lakhpat by boat down the Kori stream which is now not existent. A gurdwara stands at this place marking the visit of the Guru to this place. From Lakhpat, the Guru proceeded to the sea-shore where at Kuriani, he visited the old temples of Koteshwar and Narayana Swami. A tank at Kuriani is called after the Guru's name marking the memory of his visit.

Kuriani

Son Miani

From Kuriani, the Guru reached Son Miani or simply Miani, fifty miles west of modern port of Karachi. At a few miles distance to the south of Miani was the famous temple of goddess called Kali Mata by the Hindus and Nana Devi by the Muslims at Hinglaj. According to Meharban's account the Guru paid a visit to this temple. Not far from Hinglaj, there is a Dharmsala preserving the memory of the Guru's visit to this place.

Hinglaj

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1. Refere to A Short History of the Sikhs : Teja Singh and Ganda Singh.

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From Hinglaj, the Guru came back to the part of Miani and boarded ship for Arabia. Obviously, the Guru was not alone in the ship but in the company of a group of muslim pilgrims bound for the same destination. At the coastal town of Al Aswad the Guru landed. This place was a famous port for passengers from the east intending to go to Mecca which was not far off from here.

Al Aswad

Mecca

On reaching Mecca, he quietly lay down in the mosque and fell asleep with his feet stretched towards the Kaaba. The high priest (Rukun-ud-Din[1]) admonished him for committing an act of sacrilege and said, "Why should you be so rude as to turn over your feet towards the House of God ?" The Guru replied, "Pray be not so furious. Turn my feet to the direction where God is not." The Kazi saw reason in his statement because the prophet himself had said in Quran, "Allah is in the east and west. So wherever you turn there is face of Allah". After this the Guru was asked whether he was a Muslim or a Hindu. He said, "I am neither of the two." Next they asked him as to who was superior of the two. "Neither as such" said he, "would be loved by God." "Both would weep if they had no good actions to recommend them."

Dr. W. H. McLeod, however, raises an objection to the authenticity of the Guru's visit to Mecca. He bases his conclusion on the ground that no non-Muslim could be allowed to enter even the precincts of the city of Mecca, not to speak of holy Kaaba, and hence the Guru did not stand any chance to visit the place. But this conclusion is incorrect because of the three reasons : firstly in the 16th century there was no strict restrictions on the visit to Mecca and it was possible for even a non-Muslim to make a visit to the place and secondly the Guru was in the garb of a Muslim and was travelling in the company of a large number of pilgrims bound for the place. Thirdly all the Janamsakhis make mention of the Guru's visit to the place and their evidence cannot be brushed aside without some really solid evidence to the contrary.

Medina

From Mecca[2] the Guru proceeded to Medina, another holy city of the Muslims where the Prophet Mohammad had lived for so many years and died. The Guru reached there

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1. Sheikh Rukn-ud-Din grandson of Sheikh Bahaudin could not be, because he died in the earlier part of the 14th century. Nor could it be Sheikh Jalal because he died in 1884. Rukn-ud-Din referred to in Puratan Janamsakhi might have been one of Makhaum Jahanian's descendants or some other Sufi saint possibly from India.

2. Bhai Gurdas in Var 1 and Bhai Mani Singh in Gyan Ratnavali and Meharban Janamsakhi mention this visit.

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about nightfall and stopped outside the town. It happened to be a place where lepers were segregated and no provision was made for their comfort or treatment. The tradition goes that the Guru healed them all and as a result, the people came in crowds to see the Guru.

From Medina a common route led to the north through Palestine, Syria and Turkey. It connected the various parts on the eastern coast of the mediteranian sea, with constantinople on the straits of Dardanelles. Both the Meharban and Bhai Mani Singh accounts say that the Guru visited Sham (Syria) and Rome (Turkey). This possibility is not altogether ruled out because Bhai Gurdas also throws a general hint of Guru Nanak's wide travels in this region. In case, we accept this view the journey of the Guru to Baghdad would have to be routed differently possibly through Damascus, the capital city of Syria.[1]

Syria, Turkey

The Puratan and Bala Janamsakhis make no mention of this visit, Meharban version only suggests it by implication. Janamsakhis record that Guru Nanak on being asked the source of light replied in the darkness itself. The dawn of morning is hidden in the gloom of the night. There is none but darkness in light and light in darkness. Self-assertion freezes the self into darkness. The fire of love melts the self into light. The historic city of the Guru's visit to Baghdad is established by the discovery of an inscription by one S.D.O. Kartar Singh during the days of the First World War. The place of discovery was outside the city where now a platform is raised. A significant point is that the visit is confirmed by the statement of Bhai Gurdas that the Guru on reaching Baghdad fixed up his place of stay outside the town.[2] The English translation of the inscription is as under :—

Baghdad

> "In memory of the Guru, that is the Divine Master, Baba Nanak, Faqir Aulia, this building has been raised with the help of seven Saints, and the chronogram reads. The blessed disciple has produced a spring of Grace year 917."

Swami Anand Acharya mentions in his book 'Snow Bird' that during his visit to Baghdad, he found there another inscription, dated 917 Hijri which corresponds to A.D. 1511. The inscription reads :

> "Here spoke the Hindu Guru Nanak to Faqir Bahlol, and for these sixty years since the Guru left Iraq, the soul of

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1. On reference to Sufism, its Saints and Shrines by Dr. J. A. Subhan and Khazinatul-Asfia one would find that the Sufi Pir fourth in the Zadri succession to Abdul Qadir Jilani Dastgir was Pir Shah Bahlol Daryaee, who died in 983 Hajiri.
2. The Sikh Review October-November 1969, Page 113.

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Bahlol has rested on the master's word like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey rose."[1]

There is another shrine built by Sherif Hussain in memory of Guru Nanak and situated at a distance of 12 miles outside the city of Baghdad to which Pakistan Diarist and writer, Zafar Pyami had made a reference in one of his books.

McLeod however, holds that Guru's visit to Baghdad is an un-substantiated possibility—a remote possibility not a strong one. He does not believe in the statement of Bhai Gurdas that Guru visited Baghdad. Moreover, he discredits the pertinent evidence of Baghdad inscription, referred to earlier. A careful analysis of the arguments advanced by him in support of his thesis shows that this was a hasty inference. Bhai Gurdas was no ordinary person, unconnected, unconcerned or uneducated. Moreover, he belonged to the family of the Gurus, being related to both Angad Dev and to Guru Arjan Dev. Obviously it is not easy to brush-aside what he says.

So far as the liability of the Baghdad inscription is concerned, he has challenged on the following counts :—

(1) Language,
(2) Prosody,
(3) Interpretation, and
(4) Chronogram.

McLeod's views

Regarding the (1) Language of the rock inscription, Dr. McLeod holds that it is Ottoman Turkish, difficult to translate and it would be very surprising to find on Ottoman Turkish inscription of this date (1511 A.D.) in Baghdad first occupied by the Ottomans in 1534.

Regarding (2) Prosody, McLeod states that the text is a quatrain in the metre of mufta ilun fa ilun, mufta ilun fa ilun..... ...u ..... u..... u..... u.....a rare but standard metre ..... of Persian and Turkish poetry. In the second line of this quatrain the words "Baba Nanak Faqir" should have five syllables and therefore, do not fit in the verse, for the words constitue six or seven syllables scanning.....uu .... He says further that whereas "the vowels of the Turkish word 'Baba' are by nature short, it would be a grave fault of poetry to shorten the long vowel of Nanak in order to satisfy the demands of the metre."

Regarding (3) Interpretation, Dr. McLeod holds that the stone inscription has been painted over several times and is

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1. The Sikh Review October-November 1969, p. 113.

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difficult to read. Its first word is gor meaning 'to behold' and not Guru, hazrat-i-rabbi-majid refers to God.

Agreed. Murad of course means a wish. But there is no reason to read no'ab (a new source of water) as thwab (merit) if not just to discredit the chronogram as intended by McLeod.

Regarding (4) the Chronogram, Dr. McLeod holds that such riddle appeared much later, in the 18th century and that the date seems to have been tampered with, the year in the inscription had four figures, the fourth figure appears to have been erased and the original was 1226 and not 917 A.D.

McLEOD'S VIEWS PROVED TO BE WRONG :[1]

Now let us examine these views one by one.

Language

The language of the rock inscription is Ottoman Turkish bearing Persian and Arabic influences and it would not be correct to hold that Baghdad could not have such Turkish inscriptions in 1511, before its final occupation by the Ottomans in 1534, because Baghdad fell under Turkaman domination at the beginning of the 15th century. Thereafter, it was a prey to the warring factions of the Turks and Persians. (Encyclopedia Brittanica Vol. 22, page 592-619 & 924). Certainly Baghdad had come under the domination of the Turks even before its final occupation in 1534.

Prosody

The quatrain rhymes 'aaba' but the metre, viz. bahr munsarah muttawi mauquf is not confined to the scheme : (a) mufta' ilun, fa' ilun, mufta' ilun fa' ilun as given out by McLeod. Standard reference books on the subject lay down that its variations (b) mufta' ilun fa' ilat as well as (c) mufta' ilun fa' ilat mufta' ilun fa' ilun, are correctly permissible and thus allow the addition of a short syllable at the end of the second/fourth quarter of the hemistich. In fact no hemistich of the quatrain scans as mufta' ilun fa ilun mufta' ilun fai ilun as per guidance obtained and accepted by McLeod. The first hemistich of the quatrain under reference scans as :—

Mufta' ilun fa' ilun Mufta' ilun fa' ilat

The second also as above,

The third as :—

Mufta' ilun fai' ilat Mufta' ilun fa' ilun

and the fourth :—

Mufta' ilun fa' ilat Mufta' ilun fa' ilut.

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1. The information was furnished to me in writing by my worthy Principal B. S. Verma, Govt. College, Sangrur.

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In the second hemistich the long vowel of Nanak has been shortened and such shortening of any harfi-illat (alif, vaw and ya) especially in proper nouns is permitted in prosody. If at all it is a fault, it is a very minor one and ignorable. On the score of a slight metric blemish alone, the historic stone-inscription cannot be held as fake and thrown out or rejected outright.

Correct Interpretation of the inscription also does not contradict the fact of the Guru's visit to Baghdad.

Chronogram

There is no reason to read no 'ab of the inscription as thwab (merit or blessing in the word hereafter). The inscription is not a pencil sketch or writing on paper that could be erased, over-written or tampered with. The writing is the result of chiselled carving or embossing in stone and thus not capable of being altered except by mutilation which would be clearly discernible to any eye. The figures reading 917 are quite clear. There is no room for a fourth figure, the place being meant for the dot of 'noon', part of the word 'san' meaning the year. In any case the figure of two could not be over-carved as nine as suspected by McLeod.

Abjad[1] reckoning gives the values which totals 917. This value viz. 917 clearly chiselled in the stone-inscription is also a clear pointer to the correctness of the letters constituting the chronogram which, therefore, does not warrant any alteration in its wording.

To conclude, (a) the language of the inscription is persianized Ottoman Turkish also bearing Arabic influences, (b) the metre also is a standard Persian Turkish or allowing the words 'Baba Nanak' with permissible poetic licence of shortening a long vowel and (c) the chronogram quite correctly conforms to the year inscribed. The proof provided by the inscription proves the authenticity of Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad beyond any reasonable scope of scepticism.

Resuming his journey from Baghdad, Guru Nanak set out on the caravan route to Tehran, the present capital of Iran. From Tehran, he followed the same route for Kandhar and Kabul. On the way he passed through Meshd.[2] Bhai Mani Singh's Janamsakhi makes a reference to this visit.

Mehds

1. 10, 1, 2, 4, 10; 50, 6, 1, 2; 1, 3, 200, 1, 10, 200, 5; 1, 2, 10; 40, 200, 10, 4; 60, 70, 10, 4; totalling 917. (value as per Abjad reckoning).
2. Meshd literally means the place of Martyrdom and acquired its name from the fact that in the early 9th century, Khalifa Harun Rashid and his son and successor alongwith his son-in-law met their sudden deaths here.

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Kandhar & Kabul

From Meshd the Guru proceeded towards Kandhar[1] and from there journeyed to Kabul alongwith the popular route. This city, at the time of the Guru Nanak's visit was the seat of Babur's government. Here existed a gurdwara in memory of Guru Nanak in the Pan Chowk Jubba (now called god-i-Mehmand) of the old city upto the forties of the present century when the Government purchased the buildings of that area for their expansion and reconstruction plan for the city.

Since the visit of Guru Nanak, the Sikh contact had been carefully maintained. Sikh preachers were stationed there to disseminate the teachings of the Guru. At one time Bhai Gurdas also served as one of the Sikh-missionaries at Kabul. The Sikh sangat of Kabul was one of the most distinguished ones as grew up outside the Punjab.

Still another view, sometimes, offered, is that the Guru while coming back, travelled in what we now call the central Asian Republics of the U.S.S.R. In support of this, the arguments given are (i) the existence of Dharamshala having Udasi, Suthra or Sikh priests, (ii) Gyan Singh in his Panth Prakash and Twarikh Guru Khalsa makes mention of these places.

The view, however, is unacceptable, being somewhat far-fetched. The Dharamsalas which have been mentioned in this connection were built by Sindhi and Multani traders who carried on their trade in these areas and who were the followers and admirers of Guru Nanak.

Jalalabad

From Kabul, the Guru took up the road which led through Jalalabad and the Khyber. At Jalalabad there is a historical Gurdwara marking the Guru's visit. Another place,

Sultanpur

Sultanpur, eight miles to the north west of Jalalabad also has a gurdwara in memory of the Guru, besides certain springs of water associated with his visit. Every year the sikhs of Afghanistan assemble there to celebrate the Baisakhi Festival. The astonishing feature of the celebrations is the procession marching from Jalalabad to Sultanpur. All this evidence indicates that the Guru proceeded by the Jalalabad route and passed through the Khyber Pass to reach Peshawar, the Peshawar of Tazik-i-Baburi.

Peshawar

In Peshawar, the Guru paid a visit to the Gorakh Hatri and had a long discourse with the Jogies impressing upon them the importance of the path chosen by him for the regeneration of the people and the individuals. This visit is mentioned in both the Puratan and Meharban Janamsakhis.

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1. Bala Janamsakhi.

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From Peshawar, the Guru travelled homeward by the road which passed through Hassan Abdal, Tilla Bal Godai, Gujrat (Pakistan) etc. and reached Lahore. On the way, he passed through Saidpur. Babur, at this time, invaded the Punjab for the third time in A.D. 1520-21) and inflicted horrible atrocities on the people.

According to the memoirs of Babar, "The inhabitants of Saidpur were put to the sword, their wives and children carried into captivity and all their property plundered." At this, the Guru's heart bled and moved to the core and he composed one of the finest compositions found in any language. Collectively, the hymns composed at this occasion are called 'Babar vani'. The composition is an epitome of Guru Nanak's humanism and ethico-political philosophy. The deep anguish felt by the Guru is well-represented in the following lines :—

"Thou ruled over Khurasan.
Now Thou terrifiest Hindustan.
He has sent you the mughal as a messenger of death.
Has slaughter and lamentations
Awakened no compassion in Thee ?
The creator is the supreme Lord.
If a strong man beats a strong man
No feelings of resentment arise
But if a revenous lion falleth on a herd of sheep,
The Shepherd is expected to show his manliness."

It is said that the Guru was so much pained at the sight of loot, sack and rape that he fell down in anguish and went into a trance. "He had no nation at his back. He and his successors were yet to create one. Still he did not sit down in impotent rage and uttered idle jeremiads. He did whatever he could to put heart into demoralised herd. It is said that the Guru was taken to concentration camp along with other prisoners and was given grinding mill to grind the corn, but the mill worked automatically. People observed the strange phenomenon and carried the news to one another. Babar saw the things for himself and was greatly moved by the scene. He begged the Guru to accompany him to his tent. The Guru agreed. When they were seated, a servant, at the gesture from the King brought two cups of wine and the King offered one to the Guru. The Guru smiled and said, "I take no intoxicants that cloud the mind. Their effect passes off. I have taken the intoxicant of love of my Lord, which fills me for all times. Babar was greatly impressed and ordered all to be set at liberty.[1]

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1. I. B. Bannerjee considers this story as a setting for the verses. It may be that the Sakhikars have added some imaginary details to the real facts, but such a strong tradition as this is, cannot be regarded as a fabrication without some cogent reasons.

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Found-ation of Kartarpur

From Saidpur the Guru proceeded to Talwandi and from there to Sultanpur. On the way, he came to the spot on the bank of the Ravi where he founded a new Basti named Kartarpur (city of the creator) where he lived a normal house-holders' life between 18 to 20 years. Even now he undertook short tours in the Punjab. One of them according to Bhai Gurdas, was to Achal Vatala and Multan. He cast off his Udasi's garb and putting on the dress of a normal householder, began to lead a settled life.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF GURU NANAK'S TRAVELS

Different Janamsakhis give different dates regarding the travels of the Guru. There is general agreement for the period upto Guru Nank's departure from Sultanpur, but for the years which follow this event the Meharban, Puratan and Gyan-Ratanavali accounts all give different chronologies. The Bala version also leads us nowhere in matters of chronology.

We, however, can fix the probable dates of two fixed points, the departure, and the sack of Saidpur after which we understand that the Guru did not undertake long tours. The first may be located about the years A.D. 1500. An association with Daulat Khan Lodi has been acknowledged as likely and from this it follows that Guru Nanak probably began his travels in or about that year. The actual date may have been a few years earlier, but is unlikely to have been much later as it must have been in or soon after A.D. 1500 that Daulat Khan received his appointment to Lahore. The second point which we are probably entitled to regard as fixed is 1520, the year in which Babar sacked Saidpur.

GURU NANAK'S ACTIVITIES AT KARTARPUR[1]

Guru Nanak's life-period can be divided into three sub-periods on the basis of his activities. The first sub-period which was a period of three decades covered his childhood and early manhood; the second period which covered two decades was spent in travelling, and the last period whose span was two decades was that of relatively settled life at Kartarpur.

This last period is very important because the Guru gave expression to his own ideals in the context of normal family life. Besides, the Guru found time to concretise his plans and to evolve patterns to be followed by his followers. After a

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1. Kartarpur was founded by Guru Nanak. The land was donated by a follower of his. The city was founded just after the Guru finished his third tour : Refer to Meharban's Janamsakhi.

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perusal of a different Sakhis and vars of Bhai Gurdas we come across the following features of the Guru's activities.

FOUNDATION OF THE SIKH CHURCH

Guru Nank toured all over the world to communicate his programme of awakening the people to realise truth. So that his work should endure, he established a network of centres which he called *manjis* side by side with the centres of all other faiths. In this way, he founded, in a well-planned way, a community of his new faith, and this community of inspired disciples became the body of Sikh Church which he called *sangat*. There was a Sikh Church now all over India and outside India, in Ceylon, Tibet and Middle East. No founder of any religion had built such a vast organisation, breaking all provincial, national and cultural barriers during his own life time. Guru Nanak knew that unless it was centralized he could not expect his noble faith to survive.

To this purpose, he addressed himself vigorously. He made it clear to every one that his church was to be embedded in secular society. When Guru Nanak went on his missionary tours he put on the robes[1] of religious orders of the holy places he was visiting. Holiness in these centres was inseparable from the holy garb. Now when 'Baba came to Kartarpur he laid aside the pilgrims apparel, and put on ordinary worldly dress of the Panjabis of those days' He sat on a cot and strove hard to dispel the darkness of ignorance in the minds of the people.

Disciplined Devotion

The second feature which we come across was the Guru's added emphasis in the religious and social discipline. The *Japji*, the *Rahiras*, the *Kirtan Sohila* were fixed as morning, evening and night prayers. In the day time, discussions were held, and the Master delivered sermons on the basis of questions put to him. Kirtan was held both in the early morning, following individual meditation, and also in the evening following the conclusion of the day's work. No one was expected to take the programme lightly. Guru himself observed the discipline very strictly.

Regular Instruction

The next feature of the Kartarpur pattern was the regular instructions imparted by the Guru. Such instructions could be given to individual followers as also to the regular gatherings of his disciples although the latter was more probable. The content was, however, the same. "In both cases there would be the same emphasis upon the greatness of the God, upon His gracious self-revelation, upon the perils of human

1. Bhai Gurdas Var I, Pauri 38.

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condition, and upon the paramount necessity of meditation on the Divine Name. Trust in conventional external forms would be exposed as essentially futile sometimes by means of gentle irony and at other times by direct denial of their efficacy. Those who placed their confidence in status conferred by caste or by wealth would be sternly admonished, and any one who depended on religious hypocrisy would be soundly condemned. His teachings had very deep effect on the people, many of whom embraced his religion. Bhai Budha, Lehna (later Guru Angad), Taru Poput, Prithi, Kheda, Ajita Randhava, Shdikh Mallo and Ubare Khan are some of the examples of conversions at first sight to the faith of the Guru.

Emphasis on Honest Labour (ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰੋ)

Disciplined Worldliness

The fourth feature of the Kartarpur activities was regular daily labour. In the works of Guru Nanak asceticism is explicity rejected and in its place a disciplined worldliness is set forth as the proper path for the believer. The Guru himself worked in his fields and did all odd jobs which a peasant had to do His concept of a disciplined worldliness also enjoined a continuation of normal relationships and no wonder that his wife and sons lived with him at Kartarpur. After the fall of Sultanpur under the sway of Babur, Bibi Nanki and Jai Ram are also said to have shifted to Kartarpur.

Common Free Kitchen—*Langar*

The next thing of the Kartarpur pattern of activities which strikes is the foundation of regular free kitchen. Every one worked for his living and gave a part of his earning for the free community kitchen. All the people, the Brahmins and the Parihia, the king and the pauper, the Muslims and the Hindus had to sit together and eat their meals to their satisfaction Free kitchens were attached to the *Khanqahs* of various sufi orders but they were never regarded either as the internal part of the Church or the social institution to serve as an instrument to evolve a society, free from caste-prejudices and wealth prejudicies etc.

Collection of Compositions

Books of Hymns

The next important aspect of the Kartarpur activities of the Guru was the committing of his sacred words to writing. These were the years when Guru Nanak was surrounded by disciples who received instruction from him and who presumably recorded what they had received. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh "the scribes wrote down the compositions of the Guru and many devotees copied the daily prayers and hymns. These collections were called Bani Pothies (books of hymns). Some scholars suggest that *Japji* was composed

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at Kartarpur. This contention is unfounded. The *Japji* was composed at different periods. The first verse, according to all records, was composed when he received the call at Sultanpur Lodi. There is a story in old Manuscripts of Balas Janamsakhis in which Guru Nanak is said to have edited it and rearranged the verses in the present final order. *Asa di var*, another composition was composed by Nanak at Pak Pattan at the request of Sheikh Ibrahim before he set out for his eastern and southern Journeys. Similarly *O·In Kar* was composed on his return from the South. Pothi has been accepted as his maiden composition written during his early years. In this way, all the major compositions were completed before he settled down at Kartarpur. Out of the smaller compositions *Bara Maha*, seems to have been composed at Kartarpur.[1] The Bani Pothis or the Book of his sacred hymns, compiled during his life time, became the spiritual regalia which passed on from him to Angad and from Angad to the third Guru. Out of the three or four Pothis brought by Guru Arjan from Goindrical one was Pothi which Guru Nanak got compiled and edited under the supervision of Angad during the last few years of his life.[2]

Panjab Tour

Achal Batala

Bhangar Nath

Multan

Pak Pattan

No doubt, the Guru led a settled life at Kartarpur but he stole some time to go out of the place to enlighten the Yogis of Achal Batala which was one of their important centres. The occasion was the Shivratri festival. Guru Nanak acquainted them with his own philosophy. The Yogis who were at first furious at the sight of Nanak calmed down and their leader Bhangar Nath expressed "You are Nanak, the greatest living enlightened of the dark age. In this iron age of ignorance and moral degradation you have shown to the people the path of sight and truth." Guru Nanak also met Bhai Lalo at Gujranwala where he had shifted from Eminabad after its sack by Babur. The Guru also went to Multan. Maqdoom Baha-ud-din accorded him hearty welcome. Jalal-ud-din of Uch also received him warmly. After meeting his friend Sheikh Ibrahim at Pak Pattan, Guru Nanak came back to Kartarpur. On September 22. 1539 A.D.,[3] Nanak passed away. According to Puratan Janamsakhi "Before Nanak's death, a quarrel arose between his Hindu and Mohammadan followers as to the disposal of his corpse. The former wished to burn, the latter to bury it. Nanak was asked to decide it. He said, 'Let the Hindus place flowers on my right and the Musalmans on my

1. Dr. Trilochan Singh : Guru Nanak, A Biography; p. 470.
2. Mehma Parkash, folio 29.
3. The date given in Kartarpur manuscript of Adi Granth is Asu Vadi 10, 1596 B.K., which corresponds to September 7, 1539.

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left. They whose flowers are found fresh tomorrow morning may have the disposal of the body.' After the flowers had been set on each side of him, the prophet drew his sheet over the flowers as well as himself. Next morning the sheet was found unchanged. When the sheet was removed, both the sets of flowers were found equally fresh but the body had disappeared." The version is replete with unhistorical facts, but one thing which emerges is that he was loved alikely, the Hindus and the Musalmans, and this was really the great triumph of his example and teachings.

TEACHINGS OF GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak's teachings may be evaluated in the context of the contemporary socio-political and religious condition and his vision vis-a-vis the people. Politically, the Punjab was not well. Undoubtedly, it experienced peace during the Lodi rule, yet it could not escape the strain to which it was put on account of the political intrigues at Delhi. Its administrative apparatus had to be overhauled to meet the new challenges; but it was not possible for Daulat Khan to do so on account of his own uncertain future and the danger of the Mughals hovering on the periphery of the Punjab. Besides this, the corruption, the absence of the Political will to uplift the masses and growth of feudalistic tendencies—all these things had made the political scene unpleasant—rather irritating. Socially, the people were lacking in dynamism, so essential for the progress of a nation. Still the society based on caste-system was the norm for the Hindus. Muslims too, had lost their initial robustness and the will to go ahead. They too had developed classes which believed in exclusiveness. Moral corruption, voluptuousness, hypocricy had stalked both the Hindus and Muslims. Besides the religious groups, there were tribal, regional, local and social groups—each having air of superiority to the other and reposing faith in social exclusiveness. Religiously too, the contemporary society presented a sombre picture. It was marked by so many religious sects – each affirming faith in its own indispensability and finality.

Shaivites, Vaishnavites, Siddacharyas, Jogies were the cases in point. So far as the Jogies were concerned, they were quite strongly entrenched in the minds of the people and were a factor to be reckoned with. Neo-Brahmanism was also making headway. It was helped by the Hindu Zamindars who were able to acquire some political powers during the last days of the rule of the Sultans. All these sects had certain good principles; but certainly none put forward a programme suitable for the general uplift of the people.

Islam which, during the initial stages of the Muslim rule, the vitality which could initiate social processes for

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general good of the people, also failed to do the needful because firstly it became the religion of conquerors instead of remaining the religion of the people and secondly many empty rituals and ceremonies crept into it.

Guru Nanak observed all this. Obviously his task was extremely difficult. Social groups having religious sanction die hard. Similarly religious faiths and ideas, regional and local affinities also required strong bettering. Caste barriers also were not easy to demolish. Punjab was the welter of semitic civilization and Aryan civilization opposed to each other. Guru Nanak was to prepare a programme in a way acceptable to all types of people.

He, notwithstanding the hurdles, framed his teachings which epitomised the Guru's vision and also the due consideration which he gave to different psychic, psychological, sociological and social facets of the people. His concept of God, his theories of Karma, Hukam, Shabd, Guru, his social and economic ideas, his emphasis on ethics-based political and social actions—all these things aimed at the liberation of men from parochialism of all kinds and lending him necessary dynamism to enable him to shed off his characteristic inertia and to work for the betterment of the people as a whole.

NATURE OF GOD OF GURU NANAK

CONCEPT OF GOD—MONOTHEISM

The Unity of God-Head

'Mul-Mantra' starts with figure 1 and sikh tradition is unanimous in accepting this as a declaration of the Unity of God. There is no other than the One. Guru Nanak himself says : The Lord is manifest in the three worlds. He is eternal, Giver and there is no other.[1]

God is for him simply Ek, the one. "There are six systems of philosophy, six Gurus and six patterns of instructions but the Guru of these Gurus is one though his manifestations be many."[2]

The affirmation of unity raises an obvious question : Is this the one of monotheism or is it the one of monism ? If the thought is to be designated monotheistic, we must be clear that the monotheism of Nanak was quite different from that of Islam or other semitic religions. In Islam, God is unity and the sole cause of creation and is beyond it, but in Nanak's

1. Onkaru 25, A.G., p. 933.
2. Asa Sohila 2 and Asa 30, A.G. pp., 12, 357.

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thought, stress has been laid on divine immanence[1] whose revelation is of fundamental importance in the quest for salvation. To express it in simple words, Guru Nanak's concept of God is monotheistic in the sense that He is unity and the created universe is also the expression of the oneness of God. Guru Nanak's monotheism is also different from that of neo-Brahamanism. In the latter's case implicit Monotheism is expressed through a plurality of deities. Guru Nanak, no doubt, occasionally makes use of the deities of Hindu Mythology, but he uses them only as symbols to represent particular aspects of the divine activity.

God is Transcendent and Immanent

To Nanak God is both transcendent and Immanent. Transcendence has been expressed in term of distance as well as authority. He is apram-par—further and farther. He is Baikunth-ke-wasi—resident of Heaven and Ucho-Ucha—higher than the high. At places, the Guru names Him Malik, Sahib—Master, Jagan Nath, the Lord of the world; Nar-Pati—the Lord of Man, Jagdish and Tribhawan Dhani. Closely connected with it, God is transcendental in the sense that it is His will which is responsible for all creations and he is not subject to material limitations. God is immanent as well. Guru Nanak did not believe in an absentee God sitting idle outside the universe and watching it. He sees the Supreme Being, within the world-process as well as outside it. Out of his own, Absolute Being, God created nature, the indwelling spirit of the creation :—

God created Himself
And assumed a Name
Second besides Himself
He created Nature
Seated in Nature He watches
With delight what he creates.

Guru Nanak himself says :—

The One Omkar, wholly apart, immortal
Unborn, without caste, wholly free
Ineffable, without form or visible sign
But scorching I perceived him in every heart[2]

By making it express that He resides in every heart, the Guru establishes communications between God and Man. Failure to grasp this is regarded an immense loss.[3] The imma-

1. Immanence is accompanied in the thought of Guru Nanak by a notion of transcendence.
2. Bilaval Thiti A.G. p. 838, Translated by W. H. McLeod : Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 175.
3. Refer to Var Malar, Pauri 25, A.G., p. 1290.

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nent spirit of God is continuously present in nature and within the human heart and nature which are dependent on His Will. God Himself transcends the worlds of things and selves. He is beyond the creation in this sense while nature depends on Him. He acts through it. Similarly He does not depend on man but acts through him.

Nirguna and Sarguna

God is both Nirguna and Sarguna, both absolute and conditioned, both unmanifest and manifest. For Nanak's God, in his primal aspect, is absolute, unconditioned and attributeless (without Tamas, Rajas, Satwik).

He who unfolded the three gunas has made His abode in the fourth, i.e. to say beyond three gunas. In this absolute aspect God is beyond the scope of human comprehension.

But in order that he should be within the range of human perception, He endows Himself with attributes. According to McLeod 'He the nirguna of His own volition became sarguna in order that man might know Him enter into a unitive relationship with Him.[1]

From His absolute condition He, the Pure One became manifest; from Nirguna He became Sarguna.[2]

It is in this Sarguna aspect that man can know God and accordingly it is this aspect which is the object of Guru Nanak's meditation and of his expository utterances. This Nirguna nature of God, for all its fundamental quality received little attention, for beyond the mere affirmation there is nothing man can say of it. In the ultimate condition of union man does indeed participate in this absolute quality and so in experience it can be ultimately known out the way to God, the Sadhna must be conceived with the Sarguna expression.

The term Sarguna is Vaishnavistic and implies belief in Avtars, the divine incarnates; but in Guru Nanak's usage, this is certainly not the meaning of the term. Nanak uses this term to denote divine immanence and certainly not something resembling anthropomorphic God.[3]

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1. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion (McLeod), p. 167.
2. Siddh Goshti 124, A.G. p. 940.
3. Refer to Sabdarath, p. 827.

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Creator, Sustainer & Destroyer

There are a number of references in Nanak's compositions which pertain to the creative activity of God. He affirms "For countless aeons there was undivided darkness. There was neither earth nor heavens; but only the infinite order of God (Hukam)."[1] Then is the order of God that was responsible for the creation of the universe. Guru Nanak uttered:—

"His Will is that creates the universe through
Will one cannot tell
Through Will the stream of life doth flow
Through Will is greatness won". (Jap)

"The Lord of Himself created Himself, and
Assumed He Himself the Name
And then He created Nature and abiding with it
He revealed in His wonder." (Asm M.1) 463

Sustainer

God not only creates world but also loves it and in doing so sustains it.

"He who created the world watches over it
Appointing all to their various tasks".[2]

And in another passage, both his creative and sustaining activities are affirmed.

He being sustainer participates in the life of the universe which he has established but from this it may not be inferred that God was not self-existent, it only means—

God, the one is creator and sustainer, and so too He is destroyer :

"He who created also destroys; apart from Him there is no other.....Having destroyed, He builds and having built He destroys. Casting down He raises up and raising up he casts down. Having filled the sea He causes it to dry up and then fills it again for He, the one beyond care and anxiety has the power to do it.[3]

God is Omnipotent and Omniscient

He is very powerful. According to Nanak, God is the sovereign Lord, the wielder of absolute authority, the possessor

1. Refer to Sabdarath, p. 827.
2. Suhi Chhant A.G., p. 765.
3. Oan Kar, 31, 41. A.G. pp. 934, 935.—Translation by Macleod.

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of unqualified power. Guru Nanak in his composition 'Jap' says:—

"Whatever is, is by His will, nothing is outside His sway."

After the manner of a King, He works His will by simple order 'God said, let there be light and there was light'. Such is power of God that he can make hills disappear and rivers flow in their place and seas to emerge in place of sandy deserts (Var Majh ki Slok Mohalla 1). He is the Lord of Sur (gods) & Asur (demons). He is Asur Sangar and Sarb Kala Samrath. He has immeasurable power.

God is accordingly Anath, Omnipotent. He is also Omniscient; He is Dana, Bina and Prabin (Knower, Seer & Wise) and Antaryami (knower of the innermost things). Guru Nanak utters:—

> The Sovereign Lord created this visible world
> He sees all, comprehends all and knows all
> (creation) both within and without.[1]

God is Eternal. God is Satya—Permanent

Guru Nanank in 'Jap' says that God is that—permanent. He is 'abnasi'—eternal, 'anadi'—without beginning, 'akal'—beyond time. He is Ajuni—unborn, non-incarnated. He is Achal—constant. He is Amar—deathless, Achut—incorruptible. Since God is unborn and, self-existent; he cannot come as incarnate; because to be incarnated would mean caught up in the cycle of death and birth, the characteristic quality of the unstable world and the ultimate anti-thesis of God's own Eternal being. But the world which he has been created is unstable and unpermanent subject to flux, decay and dissolution. God is, therefore, detached from his own creation which is maya; He is *Niranjan*, *Atit*, *Nirmal*, and *Nirlep*. Nor can he be represented in idols because idols can never be beyond time and can perish any moment. In this way the doctrines of Avtars and idols worship have no place in Nanak's theistic thought.

Formless

As a complementary to the absolute nature of God, He has been regarded as formless because to give form to God would mean circumscribing the absoluteness of Him. In token of the affirmation of this belief, Nanak rejects not merely idols and avtars but also authromorphic language. He is Arup—Nirankar—the formless one. Nirankar is in fact the oft-used epithet of Guru Nanak to express this particular concept. Nanak utters 'You do not have any form nor any material sign; you are above all this.'[2]

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1. Asa Patti Likhi 24, p. 433 as translated by W. H. McLeod in his book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'.
2. Suhi Asa 1 (3) A.G. p, 750.

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"The absolute nature and the eternal being of God are metaphysical qualities and there now arises the question of whether for Guru Nanak the human understanding of God can proceed from the strictly metaphysical or something more concrete. The answer is a firm negative and a negative which in its firmness rejects nor merely idols and Avtars but also authromorphic language." He is arup—formless, nirankar—the formless one. Guru Nanak says :—

Thou the eternally unchanging formless one.
(Nirankar)[1]

Ineffable

God who is absolute, eternal, Akal and formless cannot be grasped by human understanding which is strictly limited and any effort to define Him would circumscribe the infinite to bring within narrow bounds the one who is boundless. God is ineffable and man's proper and inevitable response to any authentic glimpse of the Being of God can only be that of me *(vissed)*, of fear and wonder before him Who is beyond comprehension. 'He is *agam, agochar*—inscrutable beyond the reach of intellect. Ha is Alakh—ineffable.

As God is beyond expression so is His Hukam, the Divine Order of creation.

> "No one has comprehended Thy Hukam and none can describe it. Were a hundred poets to gather together their singing could not even approach a description of it. No one has grasped its worth; all but repeat what they have heard".

Critical Appraisal of the Concept of God

Guru Nanak's concept of God should be understood and appraised against the background of the experiences, he gathered. The Guru travelled far and wide. He came across different people with different religious faiths. He met Shaivites Vaishnavites, Neo-Vaishnavites, Naths, Sidds, Sunnies, Shias, Sufis, the Muslim divines of Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, Lamas and the multitudes having faiths in local or regional deities as well as totems, magical and esoteric practices. People of different races inhabiting India and Central Asia also came in his contact. He also saw the operation of different culture-patterns and political set-ups. It can also be surmised that the Renaissance Movement which opened new vistas in the domain of the ideas on the position, role and dignity of man had its effect on the ultra-sensitive mind of the Guru. Likewise, the Guru could have not escaped the effect of the Reformation

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1. Japji A.G. pp. 3-4 : Translated by W. H. McLeod in hisbook 'Guru Nana knad the Sikh Religion'.

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which greatly weakened the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and its Pope of Rome, thereby opening the way for rational thinking in matters of religion and morality. Being extremely inquisitive, he discussed his points with people of variegated shades of opinion. His 'Vani' is replete with examples elucidating his anguish and dissatisfaction at the meaningless wranglings of the people on religious and social matters. The crafts of priests of different religious communities were perhaps the most dangerous obstacles which if not removed would spoil all the chances of Global Society to materialise. At the same time, he perceived that the basic urge of the people was to coalesce together and live peacefully.

In this context he propounded his concept of God. His God is not national because it would strengthen the national groups and encourage national particularism. Not is He communal or of any religious group. Frederic Pincott rightly says 'For Nanak there was no such thing as a God for the Hindus, a God for Mohammadans and God or Gods for the outer heavens'. Nor did he believe in any anthropomaphic God of Ramanand etc. He loftily invokes the Lord as the one, the sole, the timeless being, the creator, the self existent, the Incomprehensible and the Everlasting. He likens the deity to Truth which was before the world began which is and which shall endure for ever, as the ultimate idea or cause of all we know or behold.[1] Besides this the Guru did not recognise any deity of the Hindu Pantheon. Dr. Trumpp however views that the Guru did not forbid the worship of other Gods on ground of the unity of the Supreme. The view stands contradicted on account of the two reasons; firstly Guru Nanak at one place says: "A hundred thousand of Muhammads, a millions of Brahmas, Vishnus and a hundred thousand Ramas stand at the gate of the most High" implying that he did not have faith in Gods and secondly no verse of Nanak conveys that the Gods should be worshipped. The misunderstanding developed because at one place in 'Japji' the Guru spoke of "Three approved disciples—one the creator of the world, one the sustainer and the one who exercises the authority of death". These three approved disciples apparently corresponded to the Hindus Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. But the Guru did not recognise any difference between them on the basis of their function and considered them as the three aspects of His functional activity.

> "He the one, is Himself Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and He Himself performs all".

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1. Cunningham : History of the Sikhs.

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As a matter of fact by recommending belief in some deity or deities, his spirits-social purpose might have been defeated; the same old manifold socio-religious groups clinging to their respective gods must have subsisted. Even monotheistic God of Islam or other semitic religions did not serve his purpose because He was all powerful and beyond creations, thereby making the creations something of inferior stuff. Had Guru Nanak accepted this notion, the already depressed people of India might have not been able to get rid of the depression and demoralisation. Hence Guru Nanak's concept of God was the result of his creative response to the environment and its needs. People of all claims, races, countries and faiths could worship Him because no trace of particularism could be found in Him. He was creator, self-existent, permanent, merciful, deathless, timeless, formless, unfathomable and uncomprehensible. Moreover, Guru's concept was in tune with the expanding political and social visions. The needs of expanding states encompassing different people professing different faiths was to prepare such a psyche that might help the cohesion of the people. Admittedly the Gurus' concept of God did much in this direction. Polytheism, as expenience has shown, has always divided the society into a number of groups with propensities to be fanatically exclusive. Sociologically, it has always been the cause of division of society. The Guru's emphasis on monotheism of its own type initiated the process of the unification of the mankind in general and the Indians in particular.

HOW TO OBTAIN GOD OR FEEL UNION WITH GOD

How should Man obtain God or feel union with God ?

This will involve us in an other vital problem i.e. to say that how the nature of the man is who wants to seek union with God. Man's nature is dependent upon affiliation: if his affiliation is to the world, he suffers from pride, self-centredness, sin, death and transmigration. This condition which must be transcended if man is to attain release from transmigration and seek union with God. But how to do so: The key to the problem is the cleansing of mind and developing it spiritually so that it becomes the fitting abode for the Name, but how to achieve this ?

The greatest fault of a unregenerate man is that his mind is a victim of Haumai (self-centredness) which involves man in worldly attachments and does not allow him to see truth.

'The man victim of Haumai is unsteady. He does not know the way. He does not recognise the word[1] (Shab.)

1. Asa Ast 7 (8) A.G. p. 415.

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It is not to be crushed but restrained, for this same 'man' is something priceless. In unregenerate man, the Man (mind) is impure and unrestrained. Its evil properties are permitted to assert themselves and in consequence man remains a slave of his passions. In unregenerate 'Man' (Mind) the dominant impulse is that of Haumai or self-centredness. Guru Nanak in one of his hymns described the operation of self-centredness on man :—

"In Haumai he comes and in Haumai he goes;
In Haumai he is born and in Haumai he dies;
In Haumai he gives and in Haumai he takes;
In Haumai he acquires and in Huamai he casts away
In Haumai he is truthful and in Haumai he lies
In Haumai he pays regard sometimes to virtue and similarly to evil."[1]

All the activities of a unregenerate man are guided by Haumai. Even that which men call right or good is done only if it accords with the individual's haumai, and if it is not keeping with it it is rejected—might be in favour of the evil. Without getting rid of Haumai the path to Sehaj Avastha cannot be recognised.

Evil Impulses

The mind of the unregenerate man expresses itself in the evil impulses which are five Haumai dominant forms: Kam (lust); Karodh (anger); Lobh (greed); Moh (attachment to worldly things) and Hankar (pride). Experience shows that these five basic impulses, responsible for the deeds of violence and falsehood which earn adverse Karma and

"My adversaries are five and I am but one.
How shall I defend my house, O Man!
Daily they attack me and plunder me
To whom shall I cry ?"[2]

Maya

A man caught up by Haumai inevitably means involvement in Maya. "The Maya in thought of Nanak, is not the illusion of classical Vedanta. The world is indeed Maya, but it is not unreal. It is an illusion only in the sense that it is accepted for what it is not. Delusion is a more appropriate word. The essence of the world is its impermanence. It is real, but it is impermanent, both in the sense that it is itself perishable and in the

1. Var Asa, Slok 1 of Pauri 7. A.G. p. 447.
2. Var Majh, Slok 2 of Pauri 20 A.G. p. 147.

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sense that its attributes cannot follow a man after his physical death." "Maya is basically untruth as opposed to Truth and the expression of this untruth is the world. It is in worldly affection, in the desire to appropriate the thing of this world, that man's great temptation lies and acceding to this temptation means involvement in untruth. The result can only be separation from God and continued transmigration."[1]

Maya is, of course, the work of God, for it consists in the creation and is inseparable from it. According to McLeod "The creation is both a revelation of God and a snare. What matters is a man's response to it. If he perceives the revelation, he is on the way to a Sehaj Avastha (Equipoise). If, on the other hand, he regards it as a means of indulging in Haumai, he is on the road to his ruin. It can be either his ally or his enemy, an opportunity or a trap, a firm path or a quicksand. Even evil is from God and is to be regarded as an aspect of man's opportunity. Everything depends upon the response which a man makes, and unregenerate man makes the wrong response.[2]

How to transform the fate of unregenerate man ?

But how to transform the fate of unregenerate man ? The transformation of the fate of the unregenerate man cannot be assured by blind adherence to sacred texts. "The Pandits might say that by reading of Vedas simple inclinations are destroyed, but the reading of Vedas is a secular profession. Without understanding this, every one shall be disgraced." Indeed God's secrets are not found in Vedas or books of the Muslims. Though the thousands of Purans and Mohammadan Books tell that in reality there is one principle, none has discovered Him. There are some scholars who assert that Guru Nanak rejected the sacred Hindu books; but this seems to be a hasty conclusion. The fact seems to be that the Guru neither rejected nor accepted the sacred Hindu books. In fact, the issue of acceptance or rejection of them was irrelevent from his view-point. He simply wished his followers to discern the all pervading principles underlying the whole creation.

Reading of sacred Texts do not avail

Nor are Pilgrimages of any value

Going on pilgrimages to obtain Him is also of no value. Guru Nanak writes :—

"Ganges, the Jumna, the meeting of these rivers at Tribeni, Prayag, the seven oceans.

Alms, Charity, and worship are all contained in God's name.

I recognise Him the one God in every age.

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1. W. H. McLeod : Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 184.
2. W. H. McLeod : Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 186.

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Nanak, in the month of Magh, if I repeat God's name with great delight, I bathe at the sixty-eight places of pilgrimages."

Idol worship also is irrelevant

The idol-worship was also rejected as a means of regeneration of un-regenerate man. Firstly, God being formless and Omnipotent can't be represented in idols and secondly, it would mean God dwells only in temples and outside them, any crime can be committed. Thirdly, in no case, the idols can be the ultimate aim, though in a very narrow sense these might help man to acquire the quality of the concentration of mind. On idolatory the Guru commented : —

"Blind and dumb (They i.e. the Hindus, walk) pitch darkness worshipping this ridiculous stone which they have set up. It sinks, so how can it carry you across (the ocean of existence)."

Ascetic practices are also futile

The belief that ascetic practices would help an un-regenerate man is also a mistake. The Guru in one of his hymns dwells at length in the futility of the current ascetic practices.

"He who sings songs about God without understanding them; who converts his house into a mosque in order to satisfy his hunger; one being unemployed, has his ears pierced (so that he can beg as yogi); who becomes a faqir and abandons his caste; who is called a giver or pir but who goes around begging—never fall at the feet of such perons."

Conventions & Rituals would not avail

Guru Nanak's condemnation of the traditional rituals was practically unequivocal. To him, the far better method of washing off impurity was to hear, obey and love God.

The regeneration of the unregenerate man can only be achieved through treading the path of 'Nam', Hukam and Shabd. He is advised to seek the help of Guru. But then the questions arises : What is 'Nam' ? What is Hukam ? and what is Shabad ? and who is 'Guru' ? Now we endeavour to explain all these concepts.

The Guru

Sikhism assigns a significant place to Guru. Guru was held equally important in Bhakti movement. Nath tradition and Budhist Tantric Tradition, Sant Tradition also inherited the traditional esteem for the Guru; but in this tradition a major modification was effected in the traditional

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doctrine of the Guru. Kabir, the geatest representative of Sant tradition did not believe in any human Guru, for him the Guru or Sat Guru represented the inner voice. No doubt he regarded the Guru as an essential mediator of Divine Truth but certainly the Guru was not human link. Guru Nanak, by and large, follows Kabir, although imparts clarity and tenseness to the conception. Guru Nanak lays emphasis on the absolute necessity of the Guru. According to Nanak

"The Guru is the ladder, the small ship, the raft by means of which reaches God.

The Guru is the lake, the ocean, the boat, the river, the sacred place of pilgrimage.

If it pleases Thee I am cleansed by bathing in the lake of truth."[1]

But who is Guru ? The term Guru is used in three senses: (1) The Guru is God, (2) The Guru is the voice of God, (3) The Guru is the word, the truth of God. The Guru is God is clear from the following verses in the Guru Nanak's composition:—

The Guru is God ineffable, unsearchable.

He who follows the Guru commands the nature of the Universe.[2]

Similarly the following passage proves that the Guru is the voice of God:—

'The Master is near at hand and yet,
O My wretched soul, you do not perceive Him.
It is the True Guru who reveals Him.'[3]

Yet there is another piece of composition of Guru Nanak which goes to prove that Guru is the word. In the Siddh Gosht the Siddhs asked the Question:—

Who is your Guru, of whom are you disciple ?

Guru in his reply uttered:—

"The 'Word' is the Guru," and the mind (which is focussed on it) is the disciple. By dwelling on the ineffable one, on Him the eternal Guru Gopal, I remain detached. It is only through the 'word' that I dwell on Him and so through the Guru the fire of Hauman is extinguished.[4]

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1. Adi Granth. p. 17.
2. A.G. p. 1125. Translation by McLeod in his book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'.
3. A G. p. 1274. Translation by McLeod in his book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'.
4. Sidh Gosht A.G. p. 943 : Translation of McLeod.

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How to reconcile these three senses of the term, Guru ? Apparently these terms do not reflect any identity; but on probing deep into the matter one would find one of the basic identity which these three senses possess. In the words of McLeod, the passage quoted above from Siddh Gosht brings out this identity not just with the announcement that the word is the Guru, but also with the reference to the Guru Gopal. God Himself is Truth. In order to accommodate this fundamental belief to the limitations both of language and of the human understanding, distinctions, if not absolutely essential, are at least very convenient.[1]

This definition of Guru poses a problem. "Were the Ten Gurus not Gurus of the Sikhs ?" The human forms of the Gurus were not Guru, but the essence, the spirit and the Divine Light they embodied. This can be amply proved by quoting an example. It is stated in the old Janamsakhi that when Guru Nanak finally resolved to make Lehna his successor he put five paise before Guru Angad and fell down before his feet. In the Takki-di-Var or the coronation ode we are told that Guru Nanak in having the Guru Angad reversed the order of things. If this was really so, if Guru Nanak had actually bowed down before Guru Angad, it must be regarded as a very significant fact. It shows that from the very beginning the impersonal character of the Guruship was recorded. The personality of the Guru was detached from the spirit of the Guruship, which was to be regarded as the one indivisible and continuous.

Guru Gobind Singh himself writes in Bachitar Natak :

"Nanak assumed the body of Angad and made his religious current in the world.
Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das
And One lamp is lit from another
The holy Nanak was revered as Angad
Angad was recognised as Amar Das
And Amar Das became Ram Das
The Pious saw this, but not the fools
Who thought them all distinct;
But some rare person recognised that they were all one."

Mohsan Fani writes at one place that in a letter to him, Guru Hargobind actually signed as 'Nanak' and according to Bannerjee, in private correspondence all the Gurus followed this practice.

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1. W. H. McLeod : Guru Nanak & the Sikh Religion, p. 199.

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'NĀM' (Name of God)

Name has been assigned a very important place in the process of the regeneration of man. "Without Name one has no honour and lives his life in shame and is in the tight grip of Maya and is totally robbed by it."

The Guru regards 'Nam' as the remedy for a diseased world.[1] Again the Guru says "without the Name of God birth into this world is fruitless. Without the Name one eats poison, speaks evil, dies without merit and so transmigrates. Without the Name, there is no salvation. At another place it is said there is nothing but 'Name' in the house of the Guru."[2] Then what is the Name ? Does the Name mean names of God. The names such as Khuda, Allah, Sahib, Prabhu, Jagdish, Ram, Hari, Keso, Gopal, Parmeshvar all but names and are non-essential. There are, however, some names as for instance 'Nirankar' and 'Niranjan' but they express aspects of 'Nām' and not 'Nam'.

The Nām is the total expression of all that God is. In fact whatever he has made is an expression of His Nām. There is no part of creation which is not such an expression.[3] It is also the pervading spirit the bright essence which informs all life and all creation. It treasures within itself all that God is and is not. In the Nām, the Lord's spirit resides. May the 'Nām' in me be dwelling. Without the Guru we would be in darkness. Without the Word we understand not life. The word of the Guru is light. His word's light leads to Truth [4]

Since creation is expression of creator and so as manifestation of His birth, we herein find the answer to the question as to how the individual is to perceive this truth. Let anyone look within him, around him and in all that he has created, he will understand the nature of what he sees and thus ultimately understand God and the way to Him.

To realise Nām one should prepare oneself by following eight fold path: Santokh; contentment; Saram; Jugat (self cultivatism); Jamati (faith); Ai Panthi, Sagal Jamati (Respect for all faith); Man Jite Jagjit (Kindness and courtesy to others); Daya (Compassion) and Gian (Knowledge).

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1. Dhanasari Chhant 1(1) A.G., p. 687.
2. Bhai Rang, A.G p. 1127.
3. Japji, Pauri 19.
4. Adi Granth, Sri Rag, p. 55.

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The Nām is a realisation, the coming of God's grace within oneself which obliterates the sense of the other[1] and makes one not only Be Himself, but be a portion and link of God. Like the Vedantist, however, the sikh does not believe that he ever becomes He. Nor does he become a seer, or a witness, into the play of life thereafter; he plunges himself into that activity, believing all the while that he is acting only as the will of the Lord.

Discipline of 'Nām'

In order to realise the name; one must observe the discipline of Name. The practice of Name is mechanical to start with and has its dynamic adjuncts, without which it cannot go together.

The first adjunct is ethical life. Unless a man leads an ethical life he cannot come near God, but sikhism does not confuse the ethical values with the religious experience.

One must rely on prayer and the company of holy men (Sangat) to support and sustain him in his life of ethical resititude.

The second adjunct of the practice of Name is 'Sewa' (self service) i.e. to say that he should endeavour to the best of his capacity and ability to help others to tread the path of seva through socio-political activity.

The third adjunct is that the discipline of Name must be constantly vitalised by Bhakti, devotion to God. The word Bhakti has the literal meaning of 'well joined'. Since Bhakti is 'joining with' or participation in the God's, it pre-supposes an object distinct from subject. The object in the case of Sikhism is not avtar as it is in Vaishnavism but Bhakti in its positive sense of canalising and sublimating the whole emotive energy of the individual to sustain the continuous yearning for a vision of God. The Guru says :—

"Guru Man Mario Kar Sajog, Ahinis Ravio Jog"

The last adjunct of the discipline of Name is the intuitive understanding of the philosophical truths which underlie the world of phenomena. This is called true knowledge or Gyan. The sikh scriptures commend that a sikh must always strive to

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1. Without the word how can one cross the action of fear, without the Name the disease of duality has spread throughout the world Men have sunk and so perished. A.G. 1125.

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have intuitive understanding of scientific and philosophical truths through discussion or meditation etc.

"This in short outline is the discipline of Name. It consists of the synthesis of the three well-known paths recognised in the religions of mankind naming the path of disinterested action, the path of devotion and the path of knowledge. The modern Hindu thinker Aurovindo Ghosh in his own way, has tried to express something similar under the title of 'Integral Yoga', though it is definitely something less but expressed in a more sophisticated and modern literary style.

Meaning of the Realisation of Nām

Even after realisation, 'Nām' cannot be defined, it can only be imperfectly described. One who has realised 'Nām' feels that it is aesthetical insight leading man through appearance to reality, through world to God. In that state the whole, the experience, the experiencer and experienced is one linked unity. People denying the existence of God do not and cannot deny the existence of God, transcendental aesthetic experience and some power which is the source of such an experience. Thus, for instance, Huxley once wrote, "There are certain experiences which transcend ordinary experience make the individual feel enlarged and have a quality of absoluteness and perfection which is absent in the human affairs of everyday."

In communion with the 'Nam', one enters into a state of wismadi—and cannot but express wonder and joy at the indescribable immensity, infinity of God and His Divine manifestation.

Name should be practised while living in the world, since in the eyes of a wismadi—who is in aesthetic union with 'Nam', there is no duality between the individual and the universal, he is the right type of person (Gurmukh) who can do good to humanity. Hence he should not abjure world—rather live in it but live like a lotus in water. He is a Panch, Plato's philosopher King—Brahm Gyani—one who has realised God and has acquired Divine knowledge. "Such a man does not fear any body or does he forget anybody. The Panch is the ideal man of the Guru. His qualities have been described by Nanak in his Japji. He is saint in religion, a true statesman in political assembles—all his actions are guided by *Bibek Budhi*. He is Jiwan-Mukt—enjoying perfect release while living in the world. He attains perfection in virtue and happiness. Although the limitation of body and the world are there, yet they do not restrict his perfection which is more of the soul than of the body. Perfection does not come after death. It is attained

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while the Panch is alive. He overcomes the idea of Haumai and feels one with the universal in nature.

SHABD (WORD)

Closely connected with Nam is the term Shabd. Guru Nanak's concept of Shabd is different from that of the Naths. In the context of Nath theory, the term is used in conjunction with Shabd which denotes mystical sound which can be heard only to the persons who, through Hath Yoga, succeed in making the Kundalini awake and cause Ida and Pingla flow in Susumana. The Guru's concept of Shabd recognises no Ida no Pingla, no chakra, no sasumana, and no dasam duar. Śhabd in Guru Nanak's connotation is revelation as also the vehicle of revelation of God and is regarded by the Guru as the only proper object of man's contemplation. By doing so and by the total conforming one's life to its spirit, man passes into a condition of union with God. He has neither form, colour, nor material sign, but he is revealed through the true word (Shabd).

By the Guru's leading he obtains salvation and is no longer bound to the wheel of transmigration. Meditating on the word (Shabd), repeating the name of God, he is released.

"Without the word (Shabd) one is condemned to wonder. Worldly affection, cause way to sink (in the ocean of existence).

O man, apply your understanding to the word (Shabd) and cross over. He who has not followed the Guru and has not understood the divine Name (such a person) continues to transmigrate"[1]

'Nanak, the true creator and the Lord is
comprehended through word.'[2]

A close examination of the different cannotation of Nam and Shabd would show that Nam is synonymous with the word (Shabd). The functions which have been assigned to Nam can without exception be found in word. Nam is the expression of His total personality, mainfest or unmanifest, conditioned or unconditioned, the word is also the expression of the same. Nam is revelation as also the word (Shabd). Nam and shabd both are objects of contemplation. The standard to

1. A.G. p. 19 : Translation by W. H. McLeod.
2. A.G. p. 688.

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which the lures of the individuals must confirm.[1] There are many passages in the composition of Guru Nanak where the identity of these two terms is obvious.[2]

There are however, some extracts in the compositions of the Guru which bring out implied distinction. "In such cases the word appears as the medium of communication and the Name as the object of communcation. Both remain, however, expression of God's truth."[3]

HUKAM

'Hukam' is one of the fundamental concept of Sikhism. In 'Jap' the Guru puts a question of himself 'How is truth to be comprehended by man ?' And then he answers 'Truth is to be found by submission to Hukam'. Now what is the Guru Nanak's concept of Hukam ?

The concept of Hukam as propounded by Guru Nanak implies in it the Giver of the order and the order itself. This being so, its form depends upon the concept of the order-giver. Rigvedic religion was polytheistic and only in its later phase, the idea of supreme God began to be hinted. In Upanishads, the idea of Par-Brahm was undoubtedly emphasised but because of the differences on this point of various Upanishads, it could not be put forth with clarity. As a result of these differences six schools of philosophic thought came into being but the differences could not be ironed out.

Sankhya does not believe in the existence of God. Yoge-shastra believed in God, but does not believe in his power creating Prakriti and Jiva. According to it, both these things are self-existent just as God. Jaimani has not even mentioned Ishawar.

In the 8th century Shankar Acharya perpounded the concept of monistic God but he too regarded Parkirti and Jiva as separate entities. Ramanuj and other Hindu religious thinkers with a little difference here and there, preached such like ideas of Parbraham.

In view of this, it can be safely inferred that the God of the Hindus cannot be equated with God of the Sikhs. In the latter case He is considered all powerful, sole creator, timeless, deathless and so on.

So the order of such God is obviously different in nature and form than that of the God or Gods of the Hindus. Accor-

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1. Refer to Bhairau 8 A.G. p 1127.
2. Refer to Oankaru 19, A.G. p. 932, Bhairau A G. p. 1125.
3. McLeod : Guru Nanak & the Sikh Religion.

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ding to Dr. Fauja Singh, there is no doubt that there are some stray hints in Unpanishads but vague hints do not portray the details of the concept. Budhism and Jainism were not in a position to express themselves on Hukam, because of their non-belief in the existence of God.

The concept of Hukam is very near the Muslim traditions. In Islam, as in other semitic religions, Hukam of God is the sole creator of the whole creation. Guru Nanak affirms his faith in this. According to him it determines the regular cycle of human existence, all are under it. In accordance with the 'Hukam' we are born and we die. Ahead and behind the Hukam pervades all.

Hukam, Karmic Theory and Grace

From all this, it can easily be surmised that the basis of Sikh concept of Hukam is Islam, but the concept in its totality is quite different from that of Islam. Karma and Grace are necessary adjuncts of Hukam. It is closely connected with the Karm theory and also with the concept of Grace. Hukam, Karm theory and concept of Grace are so much intermixed that each is affected by the other and acquires new significance.

The operation of the law of Karma, according to which man has to reap the reward of his own actions is a must in Budhism, Jainism and Brahmanism. It smacked of determinism in our fate and gives impression to the persons concerned that there is no way out to salvation, thereby making them pessimistic. The concept of Hukam emphasises that if he can order any thing to happen, he can also order that this thing should not happen. In view of this the mechanical operation of the law of Karma can be stopped. By striking this note, the Guru opened gates, flood-gates of optimism and hope, because there was scope for the people to strive for salvation. From this viewpoint; Guru's concept of Hukam proved to be lever to optimise the people.

The Guru uttered:—

"As the Hukam, so too the deed."

When one meets the True Guru and understands the Hukam, one attains to Truth. Salvation is not wrought through one's own efforts. "Nanak, such a claim would bring destruction." Again at one place, the Guru says:—

> "Their deeds follow them, and they reap what they sow. But the Guru's word erases the blot of thousands of evil deeds of the past and the greatest sinner can become the greatest saint."

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Grace is also the quality of Hukam (the Divine Order Giver). In fact the grace is also a sort of Hukam. Grace is that aspect of divine order whereby there is imparted internal and pre-requisite illumination. Grace can obliterate sins of many births instantaneously.

When the balance of deeds is struck the Yama striketh us in our head. Then we have to render the account when he asketh for it.

It is on the meditation of True one that we are saved and the Lord forgiveth us.

But should it be understood that Guru Nanak by propounding the concept of Grace, denied the relevance of Karma. But it is certainly implied that Karma theory was not to be preferred to His Grace or His Hukam. Karma determines the nature of birth but it is through Grace that the door of salvation is opened.

Some scholars have defined Hukam as cosmic order but it does not sound correct. In fact, this order is tridimensional: Nadar, Karm and Humam are its three dimensions.

Ultimate Object

The ultimate object of man is not to be God but to be God-like. He must enjoy Absolute into himself in the fulness of its self-consciousness. Man in this stage is in the union with God and he becomes Supra-soul. This union means an end for ever to the trans-migratory process with all its attendent sufferings and instead an eternal, changeless tranquiblity. The exact description of this stage is by silence. But this does not mean that the Absolute is mere blank any more than the apparent sleep of a spinning top going round at full speed means absense of motion. Human understanding like the human eyes can operate only within certain limits and certain conditions when the speed of a spinning top goes beyond a certain limits, the eyes cannot see the revolutions that are being made. But that does not mean that the top has come to standstill. Similarly, when the very excess of this stage in the Absolute makes us unable to understand it we cannot say that it is a mere negation.

Rebirth & Transmigration

By transmigration, we mean that after the death of the individual the soul shuffles off to another body. Through all the ages since the creation millions of souls have passed from one specie to the other. Thus there is a chain of life.

According to Dr. Trilochan Singh "there is a difference between re-birth and transmigration. A man may be reborn as

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a man to continue his spiritual journey. Enlightened souls are reborn to redeem the world of sin. They are sent by God as his messengers and they go back when their mission is complete. Souls condemned for their wickedness suffer transmigration through a cycle of rebirths and deaths in lower animals which in Sikh theology is termed as Hell."

Every man can cut asunder the bonds of birth and death during human life, and attain perfection. This hope is extended by the Sikh Gurus to the lowliest of the low the every human being living on the planet, no matter, what his status colour of the skin or nationality and race.

The bonds are cut asunder,
Ribirth has ended.
The mind is conquered and victory achieved.

Hence wanton defacement of this temple of God, the body is considered sacrilege. Man should eat, drink and live cheerfully enlightened and decent life. But from it, it should not be surmised that preservation and beautification of flesh is the ideal. Sikhism does not encourage man to look on the flesh with cynical contempt but enjoins them to control it. Sikhism is basically different, so far the attitude towards man is concerned, from Hinduism, Budhism and Jainism, because while they lament the misery of the body, the Sikh Gurus sing the nobility of the body. The Jain Monk in particular feels ashamed that his soul has been housed in this repulsive physical structure of flesh, blood and bones of nine opertures each of which ceaselessly secretes filthy substances.

Creation—a Sagun aspect not a Veritable Hell

Unlike semitic religions, which regard creation as the result of first sin, and the Aryan religions which being essentially metaphysical regard creations as a mere illusion, Nanak considers creation as an emanation from God. Out of His one Absolute Being (Ekam-Kar); emanated through his creative Will Kavao: emanation, on aflux of His spirit and all-pervasive sight (Im-kar). Out of this will there emerged the five existential elements air, water, fire, earth, either which were antogonistic in spirit but were created through the sixth principle, the unseen life-spirit (Prana Shakti); life power. It is the all-pervasive spirit of God, the eternal Omkar. Guru Nanak says:—

Through countless ages
Complete darkness brooded
Over utter gloom & void
There were no worlds, no fermaments
There was neither night nor day; nor the
sun nor the moon.

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But only God existed in ceaseless trance.
There had not been inscribed in the Vedas
Nor the scriptures of the semitic
Nor read a gospel at down, an epistle at sun-set.
Only the unspeakable spoke of Himself to Himself
Only the unknowable of Himself had His knowledge
When he so willed, He shaped the universe
The permanent He spread without roof to support it
He made the planets, the suns & stars.
Over universe in endless space
Above, below and around it
Out of the unmanifested, unmovable ground of being
To us and in us, He made Himself manifest.
(Nanak: Rag Maru p. 1035)

The creation, thus, is a sagun aspect of God. It is not a veritable hell or something to be scorned and condemned as semitic or Aryan religious world have us believe; it is the dwelling place of God as Guru Angad would have us believe. According to Guru Nanak :—

"True are His regions
True are His universes
True are His worlds
True are His forms"

(Jap ji)

Social Ideas

Importance of Householder's life

Superstitions roundly condemned

The objective of Guru Nanak's teachings is to achieve Sahej, or Parmatmik Anand or Jiwan Mukti or Mahan Skuh. Most of the hymns examplify this aim and enjoin upon the devotees to exert to their best to achieve the said goal; but while doing so the Guru in so many verses, exhorts the people to do all this in the context of the world around. In Pauri 16 of Japji, the Guru asks the people to be 'panch' in the right sense. The Guru himself led a householder's life and impressed upon the people to emulate him because this life is not an obstacle on path-way to Bliss, thus bringing out clearly the importance of living life in the world. This being so, the Guru was interested in society and the people constituting it. 'Asa Di Var' is replete with vitriolic criticism of the meaningless superstitions, Brahmanical rituals, caste exclusiveness, caste spirit, untouchability and the exploitation in the name of religion or deity, which were obviously social evils. Some scholars aver that the Guru's references to social affairs are merely social comments and do not dwell on any form of society. We feel that the even social comments imply some form of society. Whatever picture of society emerges having perused the impositions of the Guru, we give hereunder.

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Social Egalitarianism

Guru Nanak preached social egalitarianism. He roundly condemned caste-system, untouchability and other differences based on birth, wealth, locality, climes and creeds. Guru Nanak emphasised 'understand people by the light, ask not their caste'.

"In the presence of God, no one is differentiated by caste. Ask not about the birth and lineage of a person. The social world which Guru Nanak was seeking to create was a world of complete understanding between man and man. Guru Nanak also condemned the attitude of regarding woman as inferior to man. He seems to have admonished the people for denying due respect and status to them because in Guru's views woman is as much part of God as man and is the pregenitor of even the greatest of men in the world.[1] According to Prof. Puran Singh "the whole of Guru Granth is the voice of a wedded woman pining in love for the Beautiful. Her nobleness in Guru Granth is infinite, her freedom is of the highest. Both man and woman as sexes are forgotten in her voice. She becomes the supreme reality and a freed soul. In the freed soul alone is the subordination of one to the other effectively abolished and all disputes hushed."

No discrimination on basis of Sex

He strongly protested against considering woman[2] as something inferior to man. Similarly untouchability has been strongly denounced. Vaishnavites' reposing faith in observing pantry at cooking places finds no recognition in the Guru's teachings.[3] Nor do the external practices, rituals, practices, penances, and pilgrimages have any value in the society as postulated by Guru Nanak.[4]

Kirt Karo & Wand Chhako

Three fundamentals of Ideal Society

The Puratan Janamsakhi, the earliest written records has the following triple precept as the basis of an ideal society :—

(a) Kirt Karo
(b) Wand Chhako
(c) Nam Japo.

By Kirat Karo, it means that thou shall earn thy livelihood by honest creative labour, thou shalt share the fruits of thy

1. Refer to Asa di Var.
2. For details see the chapter entitled : Social Ideals of Sikhism.
3. Evil-mindedness is a low woman (dumni), cruelty a butcher's wife, a slanderous heart sweeper woman, wrath which ruineth the world a part at woman. What availeth these to have drawn the lives of thy cooking place when these four are seated.
4. Macauliffe 1, pages 1, 28, 50, 51, 228, 229, 370.

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labour with the fellow-beings and thou shalt practise the discipline of Name. By kirt karo, it is meant every individual must engage himself in honest creative work. One might adopt any profession - farming, trading or so-called menial professions; but one must be honest and truthful. In Nanak's views, it is tentamount to committing sins if we look down upon these persons who have adopted the professions of sweepers and scavengers. Guru Nanak says "There is no instrinsic merit in professions. All are alike." Parasitism in any form or shape is, anti-social and anti-religious as well. This precept also ensures that there shall be no exploitation of man by man with capital, that is, the accumulated wealth shall not be employed as an instrument of exploitation.

By 'wand chhako' it was implied that one must share the fruits of one's labour with one's fellow-creatures. By doing so, the spirit of selflessness or sacrifice is inculcated and self expands. Giving is the quality of God and in 'Japji' Nanak considers God the eternal Giver. From it follows, Sikhism regards a co-operative society as the only true society. "The basic element which distinguishes a sikh co-operative society from all those modern socialistic concepts is grounded in the sikh concept of the world as the very form of God—Hari-ka-rup, and the status of the individual as the very microcasm of God, Joti Sarup and an individual, therefore, must never be imposed upon or coerced. 'It therefore follows that while Sikhism seeks to establish a socialistic pattern and eventually a global society in which the socialist ideas of individual welfare, equality and freedom shall have full application, it is opposed to any development, which, in practice and reality seeks to destroy the worth and inner autonomy of the individual. It is for this reason that Sikhism conceives of the religious evolution of man as a necessary and integral pre-requisite and condition of its march towards the ideal society.'

The Sikh society should not be taken as a church society or a theocratic organisation. A religious state is based on the assumption that unity of religion, more or less, is essential. This attitude on the part of the state has resulted many a life and death struggle in world. The wars of religion which have disfigured the history of Europe for hundreds of years speak eloquent testimony to the fact. Similarly, a theocratic state is based on the presumption that the rulers are answerable not for the welfare of their subjects but for the salvation of their souls and the end of all political endeavour is not this world but the next. Sikhism considers these assumptions based on falsity and it believes that there lies a fundamental unity in all human beings and that unity is constituted by the thread of divine love for one-another which is embedded in every heart. For achieving agreement and unity, the order of the Khalsa relies on the

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methods of enlightenment and persuasion, recognising all the time that the heart of so great a mystery cannot ever be reached by following one road only.

Meditation of Nām

By this precept, it is meant that people should meditate on 'Nam' i.e. to say that they should never lose sight of the cosmic process and the divine will permeating every thing of the world. This would ensure them mental acquipoise and the large vision without which people are likely to fall victim to parochialism. Moreover, by imbibing Nam-culture, one does not fall victim to Haumain which causes many evil impulses to emerge in the man. The person imbibing Nam culture should not worship gods and goddesses. The Guru categorically states :—

> "My brethrens, you worship goddesses and gods
> What can you ask them, and what can they give you.
> Even if a stone be washed with water it will again sink in it."[1]

The Guru views that no stable and healthy society can be built without ethics. Moreover, he roundly condemned the unethical attitude of the people. But the ethics as preached by Nanak is life-offering while Hindu and Budhist ethics are life-negatism because they are dominated by the ethical idealism of the Monk and the recluse. Dr. Tirlochan Singh calls the ethics of the Sikhs as that of "created enlightenment and activitism", because the Sikhs are supposed to seek enlightenment and not salvation, and even this he did not want to achieve for his personal benefit—rather it should inspire people to dedicate their lives to the service of community. In view of all this, Guru Nanak considered the following cardinal virtues to be essential for the member of the society to imbibe :—

(1) Truth, Contentment and Reflection.
(2) Compassion, Righteousness and Charity.
(3) Faith, Tolerance and Restraint.
(4) Forgiveness, Humility and Service.
(5) Love, Knowledge and Work.

The acquiring of these virtues would bring about harmony and purity in social relations of the people.

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1. Macauliffe Vol. 1, p. 336.

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NANAKISM IN RELATION TO DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS SECTS

I. VAISHNAVISM & GURU NANAK

The cult whose influence was predominant in India as also in the Punjab was that of the Sahajiya Vaishnavism. The final aim of the votaries of this cult was the 'Sahaj'. By it is meant not the liberation either in any sense of negation or in the merging of the individual self in the absolute but the supreme state which is a positive state though of supernatural nature of the eternal flow of divine love—like the smooth and incessant flow of oil. Obviously the character of Sahaj is beyond any consideration of good or bad, sin or merit, birth and death and hence waveless. But how to achieve this state ? The reply to this question is intimately connected with the philosophy of Radha-Krishna as conceived by the Vaishnavism. According to the philosophical and theological works of Vaishnavism, Radha is nothing but transfiguration of the infinite potency of love contained in the very nature of Krishna. The ultimate being may be conceived in three of its states, either as the unqualified Brahmin or as the Paramatman, the indwelling principle of all beings or as the Bhagwan, the active and qualified God. Krishna as Bhagwan possesses three powers, viz. *Svarupa Sakti* i.e. the power which he possess by virtue of His ultimate nature, *Jivan Sakti* or the power through which all the beings are produced, *Maya Shakti* [also known as the Tatastha Shakti through which evolves the material world and its three attributes, Sat (existence), Chit (Pure consciousness) and Ananda (Bliss)]. The potency of the three attributes act like three powers, in the nature of God, which are known as Sandhini (the power of existence), Samrat (the power of consciousness) and Haldini (the power of Bliss). The transfiguration of this power of bliss or love is Radha, and as such the very being of Radha is already involved in the very nature of Krishna and the two are one and the same principle. Why then the apparent separation of Radha from Krishna ? It is for want of the self-realization of Krishna. God has with His nature two aspects, the enjoyer and the enjoyed. He cannot even erealise His own nature as the enjoyer. Radha respresents the eternal enjoyed while Krishna is the eternal enjoyer and the enjoyed and the enjoyer being co-relative, the reality of the one involves the reality of the other, or, in other words, Radha as the eternal enjoyed is as much real as Krishna the eternal enjoyer. The inseparable relation between the two is the eternal love-alliance of Krishna and Radha—and as Radha is eternally realising the value of her whole being with reference to her relation to the eternal enjoyer Krishna, Krishna is eternally enjoying Radha to realise the infinite potency of love and bliss that is in Him. The objective of the Vaishnavism is that every-

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one should place themselves in the position of Radha and long for the union with his beloved Krishna or to express it in simple words, every one should develop Radha Bhava or Sakhi Bhava. This relation of eternal love between Radha Krishna has been conceived and expressed in Vaishnava thoelogy anthropomorphically through analogies of human love that exists between man and a woman who become bound together by the ideal of love for love's sake.

In fact terrestrial love between man and woman proceeds towards their divine love. This path was open to any body irrespective of caste and in this way, Vaishnavism did not assign any importance to caste.

Vaishnavism does not repudiate the authority of Vedas and faith in Hindus mythology: so far as the practical side is concerned, Vaishnavism recommends the adoring of the personal God in idols.

The Guru's teachings are marked by considerable differenece from the tenets of Vaishnavism. The ultimate aim of the human endeavour in Nanakism was the same as that of the Vaishnavas. However, the Guru does not believe in developing Radha Bhava or Sakhi Bhava nor in the Radha-Krishna philosophy. In Nanakism the state of Sahaj can be achieved by merging oneself in the Absolute God. In Vaishnavism, the incarnations are sometimes enumerated as six, ten or twenty in number but the most important are Krishna and Rama but Nanakism does not believe in Avtarvad. The Vaishnavites have faith in worship of idols symbolising different incarnations of God, Hindu mythology rituals and emotional worship.

The Guru does not repose faith in any of them. Guru was most intolerantly opposed to the use of idols symbolising God. Mohsan Fani, in the days of the sixth Guru wrote that 'sikhs have neither idols nor temples for idols'. Similarly the ritual side of Vaishnavism brewed a sharp reaction in the mind of the Guru. Guru Nanak found ritualism and formalism in every religion and no wonder he attacked every kind of formalism. Plato went too far when he said that God is not to be cajoled by rites or by prayer or sacrifice. The Guru believed in prayer but he condemned the belief that God could be pleased by rituals and mechanical worship. The Guru did make use of Hindu mythology but in a different sense. Our study shows that the Guru had no faith in mythology. It entered the Guru's hymns either as survival element in his religion for purpose or illustration. The Granthic allusions to Vaishnava mythology are not to be taken as a part of Guru's teachings much less as an element of Sikh religion. The same is true of Vaishnava incarnations. The Guru instead of accepting these Avtars as

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Gods on earth used the same names for the High and formless God. So far as utterance of 'Nam' is concerned the Guru connoted it differently. In Guru's system, it stood for totality of God's creation or the spirit that sustains the totality but in Vaishnavism it meant only God's name, or muttering of God's name.

Thus from the above discussion, it becomes clear that Guru's religious system cannot be equated with Vaishnavism.

II. GURU NANAK & NATHISM

In the sixteenth century, Nathism was very popular in the whole northern India. The Guru, during his travels, met them at least three times and shared his views with them. All the janamsakhis undoubtedly are of the view that the Guru brought home to the Naths the supreriority of his message; but the fact that the Guru made copious use of the Yogis terms in his compositions leads one to think that the Guru borrowed his religious precepts from them. It is in this context that the comparison between Nanakism and Nathism or Jogism is warranted.

Nathism traces its origin from Sew who is regarded by them as the Adi Nath or original Master, There were also nine human naths, great jogies like, Mina Nath, Malsyendra Nath and Gorakh Nath who had attained immortality and became objects of worship. In addition to them the Jogies held in high esteem, the Sidhs[1] who had attained the stage of perfection through the discipline and practice of Yog.

The ultimate aim of the Naths, Sidhs or Jogis was the attainment of Jiwan Mukti or liberation while living. This state of liberation is what is meant by immortality in Nath literature. While the other schools of thought regard the final dissolution of the body or its final dissociation from the spirit indispensable for libration; the Siddhs seek liberation in a transformed or trans-materialised body, which is the perfect body i.e. to say the body that cannot be defiled and is associa-

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1. The number 84 is a mystic number used not only by the Naths but also by various other schools. The significant mention of this number 84 is found in the belief of Ajivakas who held that some must pass through 8400000 stages before attaining the human state. In the Martyayani Upanisat we find mention of and we find reference to the 84 lakhs of Yonis or births in different states. The number has also been used in Buddhistic sacred literature.

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ted with principles of Visuddha Maya which prevents it from becoming absolutely static and acts as the absolutely purified dynamic principles for its further evolution through subtler stages to lead it to the final state para-mukti. The Yogies in their perfect body are prompted by the principles of the Visuddha Maya to benevolent activities rendering spiritual guidance to the aspirants.

But how to attain this state ? The Yogic text 'Yog-Vijay' states that it can be done by observing *Ulta Sadhana*, which involves *Kaya Sadhna*. By this term is meant a slow and gradual process of continual purification, rejuvenation and then trans-substantiation of the body through various Yogic processes. It is believed that though the fire of Yoga (the purifying processes of Yoga) the ordinary body of change and decay is burnt away and from the process of purification and rejuvenation results a new immutable divine body as a transformation of the old. But how to do so. Various processes have been suggested but a particular form that has been most emphasised is as under:—

In the yogic texts in general, the moon and the sun represent the two elements underlying physical existence viz., the element of creation and preservation and the element of change and distribution. These two principles have been identified with Sakti and Siva on one hand, and with woman and man on the other. The moon situated just below the *sahassare* or the lotus of thousand petals in the cerebrum region—it is facing downwards and the sun is situated in the region of the navel or in the lowest plexus (*Muladhara*) falling upwards. It is held that bindhu which is the quintessence of the body is of two kinds viz., the yellowish white bindu and the red bindu (*Lehita Bindu*)—the former is of the nature of semen (sakra) while the latter is of the nature of ovum (*maharajas*). The *Bindus* is contained in the moon in the upper region while the ovum is contained in the sun in the navel; this bindu is Siva and ovum is *Sakti*. Since it is held that the *Amrit* or *bindu* is always to be consumed by sakti, the Nath Yogin's aim is to save Amrita from being consumed by the sun.

This aim in itself involves principle of eternal conservation effecting the perfect commingling of the principle of destruction and creation. But how to do so ? This implies many things in Yoga. It implies the practice of purifying the nerves like Ida and Pingla by controlling *Prana* and *Apana* through processes of Pranayam. The three important nerves Ida, Pingla, and Sasumana in the left, right and the middle are frequently described in the yogic texts as of the nature of the moon, the sun and fire respectively.

Since in the Nath cult, the commingling of sun and the moon has the deeper significance of transforming the material

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body into an immutable body (Div-Deh) along with the perfect control over the destructive force of the sun and then rejuvenating the whole body with the nectar oozing from the moon is suggested, this can be done by shutting the Dasam Duar (Tenth door) or placing sentinels on it. If Yogin drinks this nectar by following the practice by *Khichari Mudra*, he will undoubtedly become immortal.

Since the sun was equated with sakti, woman who was always eager to consume the Amrita of the moon, the Nath Yogis tried to keep away from woman as far as possible. They regarded woman as the enchantress of the day and tigress of the night. The face of Mina Nath in the company of women of Kadoli and his rescue by Gorakh Nath seems to be a popular poetical version of the general attitude of the Naths towards women, although in some of the yogic practices, they used women but only as mere instruments.

Differences between man and man on the basis of caste, creed and climate were irrelevent to their system. Any one could have Div-Kaya and attain liberation in life. Traditional Karma theory and its concommitant, the theory of transmigration also found no accretion in Nathism. To this extent this system was heterodox, non-conformist and protestant.

Guru Nanak's system as delineate in the foregoing pages is similar to Nathism in so far as their attitude towards caste, rituals and other formalities are concerned. But this resemblance does not go beyond. Guru Nanak's final aim was *Sehaj* or *Mahasukh* or *Jivan Mukti*. Jogies also used this term but the meaning was different. While Guru Nanak meant by it realisation of the ultimate nature of self-incomprehensible Beloved, the Naths meant by it the attainment of immortality and Mahasvarehood: moreover, the methods employed in both the systems are altogether different. While Nathism suggests employing of the means of Ulta Sadhna (Regressive process) and Kayasadhna to achieve the goal, the Guru enjoined upon his disciples to follow 'Nam Marg'. The place assigned to woman in Nankism is not that of tigress to devour mankind but that of an equal partner of a man in the drama of life. The followers of Nanak, unlike Yogies, lived in the world and still could get the ultimate objective.

The Guru, like Naths, did not reject Karm theory but had his own views about it. In Nanakism, the Karmic law is not immutable and thus its cycle can be ended by the Grace or Hukam (Divine Order) of God. In its social reflection, Nanakism was a religion of householders and hence it was interested in

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social, political actions of the people on the whole. While Nathism reduced itself into an order, or at best a sect, committed more to the esoteric and ascetic practices than in the social well-being of the people in general. Nathism, in the course of time, incorporated occultism as one of its essential features, while Nanakism regards all these things as hurdles on the path to Bliss.

Some scholars, on finding a few terms such as Anhad Shabd, Amrit, Samana, Dasam Duar in the compositions of Guru Nanak have jumped to the conclusion that the Guru incorporated the principle of Nathism. McLeod at one place says 'the roots of Nanakism lies in Nathism'.

Certainly there is no substance in the above statement. Naths used Amrit in the sense of 'Bindu' or Semen (Maharas), but the Guru uses it in the sense of Nectar of immortality. Nowhere the Guru uses the images of moon and sun in connection with the Amrit. Rather, he uses it in association with Nam. Dasam Duar in Nathism has been used in a technical sense as the mouth of Sankhini through which the Amrit pours down, Guru Nanak never uses the term in this sense. So is the case with Anhad Shabd. In Nathism it means mysterious sound, audible only when one attains the state of *Sahaj*, but the Guru always uses it in the sense of Shabd which the Guru equates with God or Truth and which has the power to destroy ego—Haumai.

Thus it is clear that the Guru's approach to the problem was different as also his final aim. Even a cursory glance at both Nathism and Nanakism would convince one that Nanakism is a system distinct in itself.

From the above, it is clear that the Guru's approach and outlook was radically different, and Guru Nanak did not incorporate anything of Nathism as such. Even the roots of Sikhism do not lie in Nathism because the Guru did not base his system on any of the fundamentals of Nathism. No wonder, the Guru felt irritated at the behaviourial pattern which Nathism inspired or recommended.

GURU NANAK AND BRAHMANISM

The Guru agrees with Brahmanism so far as the precept 'God creates the universe by transforming Himself into it and He alone is real is conceived'; but as a religious system the following animals which are considered to be the six main

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planks of the Brahamnical faith have been rejected by the Guru :—

(a) The Guru asked his followers not to believe that the truth revealed in the Vedas is absolute.

(b) Yajna or Yagya, Havan and sacrifice were discarded.

(c) As a necessary corollary of the above, the priestly class was not recognised.

(d) The Ashram Dharma Theory of dividing man's life into four stages was rejected by Guru Nanak and in its place a healthy psychological re-adjustment with man's environments within the household life was preached and emphasised by the Guru.

(e) The Varn-Ashram-based society was not given any credence.

(f) In the Guru's system, Sanskrit ceased to be the only vehicle of expression of divine knowledge. According to the Guru, no language was sacrosanct. God understands our feelings and intentions —even without their being clothed in words.

(g) The Guru does not believe that matter exists independently of God or creation remains independent of God. He, on the other hand, believes that creation is emanation of God Himself.

(h) The Karma and Re-birth are accepted by the Guru; but they have undergone a change on account of his, what we may call, the religion of grace. The nature of release or Moksha has also been conceived differently on account of the same element of grace in his system.

The teachings of the Gita have been interpreted in three different ways. One believes in Advaitism, absorption of individual soul with God with Gyan (knowledge) through sanyas (renunciation). The other is Dvaitism (dualism), soul when becomes perfect does not merge into God but reached His presence with Gyan through Bhakti (mystic devotion); the third which has been more clearly expounded by late B. G. Tilak, is what is known as Energism—Karma Marga, is derived from the practical dilemma in which Arjun was placed. This agrees with the first school except that the path in the case of the latter is renunciation and in the case of the former, it is Karma (action). The Guru makes a new synthesis. He takes up Advaitism as philosophy with Gyan in practical life. The approach to it lies not exclusively in any part of three tradi-

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tional paths but in aesthetic appreciation of the workings of God in every minute detail of our worldly life.

There are some other points of difference too. Gita accepts Avtara Theory which the Guru rejects. The Gita and the Vedanta goal of Mukt—the realeased person—is essentially individualistic. It is true that he achieves the goal through community, but on its achievement he does not live for the community. Moreover, when a man gets release by Gyan in his own life, he continues to live because of the *Praarabadh* commenced Karma. This of course dissuades him from committing suicide. But what if he dies by accident ? The Guru says that all Karma is lost as soon as the sikh reaches the stage of Jiwan Mukt. Afterwards, he gives under the will of God, not aimlessly but to help others to attain release. He swims across the worldly (Sansarik) ocean and also makes others swim. He lives to help others. He dies not when the already commenced Karma comes to an end but when God wills him to die.

The difference becomes more poignant when we look at the effort for the attainment of Mukti. The Hindu concept of Mukti is more egoistic. The Guru preaches it through Grace, combined with the humility of efforts.

GURU NANAK AND ADVAITISM

It is true that Sankara has influenced every philosophy and religion in India, but if closely examined the Guru inspite of subscribing to many views held by Sankara differs from him on many important points. The concept of ultimate reality is almost the same in both the systems. Both Sankara and the Guru are monistic idealists. The soul, the world and the Brahma are not conceived by the Sikh Gurus as three distinct realities like the Sankhya. According to Sankara all the three are one, the Brahma being the only single reality. The apparent multiplicity of men and things is due to Maya or Avidya—illusion and ignorance. The unity can be achieved through the acquirement of knowledge—Gyan—with which the separateness between Jiva—soul, Jagat—world, but the similarity ends here. Sankara's system gives no place to 'Bhakti' when the Guru regards it as one of the most important adjuncts of Nam philosophy.

The Guru does not regard the world as simply an illusion in the sense Sankara does. The Guru's cry, opines Carpenter, "Rid Thyself of duality" has no metaphysical significance. It summons to the exclusive worship of the only True. God is universal Father, who abides in every heart and makes all partners in His infinite activity. For the Guru, the reality of

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the world and the souls is not an illusion but they are real only in a relative sense. Nothing is real in the sense in which God is real. On the practical plane too, the Guru differed from Sankara. The Guru preached Parvirti in Naviritic spirit living in the world with a detached frame of mind, while Sankara preached Naviritic spirit.

GURU NANAK AND KABIR

Sant Tradition and Guru Nanak

It is said that Kabir had profound influence on Guru Nanak's thought, and as a corollary to it many a strand of Nanakism can be discerned as borrowings from the thought-pattern of Kabir, the greatest exponent of Sant tradition in India. The protagonists of this view reinforce their point of view by stating that the Guru had a meeting with Kabir.

On analysis and scrutiny, the above view does not sound correct. Even if the two saints had a meeting and a discussion,[1] it does not follow that one must have borrowed from the other. In certain matters such as caste, idolatory, formalism, faith in monotheistic God, both the teachers resemble in their approach; so are they in agreement regarding the final objective i.e. say Sahaj. Both emphasise the need of a Guru but not as human link. Both understand by Shabd, the same meaning, although Guru Nanak is clearer in his expression. But similarities do not go far.

On issues like rejection of the authority of the Vedas and disapproval of ascetism, Kabir was inclined towards compromise, while the Guru did not mince words while rejecting them. Both looked at life from fundamentally different points of view. Guru Nanak was not a visionary like Kabir; he was far too deeply interested in the fate of his fellow beings upon earth than to linger upon in the rare mystic regions. Furthermore, Kabir was deeply impressed by the futility and misery of life and sought as much isolation from life as possible instead of framing a constructive programme of reconciliation of man's spiritual and material needs. Guru Nanak regards life a beautiful thing to be enjoyed in fulness. Kabir does not distinguish between the psychological notion of mind and metaphysical idea of soul because for him mind undergoes the process of transmigration of souls, but for the Guru mind is gross in the sense that it is attached with the body and is the outcome of five elements (Ih man panch tat te janma).

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1. The guru did not meet KABIR — refer to earlier part of the chapter 'G. NANAK DEV'.

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Kabir's teachings bear an imprint of Tarik beliefs and faiths[1], handed over to him probably through Nath tradition. He uses the imagery of Ganga and Yamuna to mean the right and left nerve channels, the Triveni to mean the middle channel and the hundred-petal lotus the sun and the moon etc. and expresses his intense dislike of women. Guru Nanak does not make use of such words, phrases and images nor does he harbour hatred for woman. Nanak, in fact, considers woman as man's equal.

GURU NANAK AND ISLAM

Islam had brought to India concept of strict monotheism which not only affirmed that there is one God and none other, but rejected the belief that there can be any incarnation or Avtars of the supreme Being. The Islamic monotheism rejected even the installation of images of God as being contrary to the ideal belief in the unity of God—hend. The concept of monotheism was not totally absent in India and could be and has been traced back to the Rig Veda and the Upanishads. But the Hindu concept possessed such a great measure of elasticity that there was practically little differentiation discernible between monotheism and polytheism.

Unlike the Hindus again, the Muslims, viewed God as the sole creator of all living and non-living things. According to them, nothing is eternal or exists independently of Him. Similarly He is the sole sustainer and the sole destroyer of all. He is transcendent and He is also here, there and everywhere, but Islam has nothing of the type of the Hindu belief in immanence. As such, though man is wonderful and also the premier creation of God, the soul within him, is not a spark of divinity as the holder of the Hindu belief of immanence would have us believe. The immanence as created by God, according to Islam, is not limitless but consists of seven upper and seven nether regions—the Imperial throne of the Almighty having seated atop the uppermost region, called Arsh-i-Barin. The founder of Islam, Muhammad was accepted as the special messenger of God and Muslim scripture, the Quran, was recognised as the revealed word of God. For the worship of God, the votaries were enjoined to offer daily prayers of Namaz (each at an appointed time) to observe fasts every where for the full month of Ramzan and to give in charity 10% of the income (zakat). The human mind is concerned by Islam as an inter-play of angelic and demonic forces. As such, the believers are expected to be beware of machinations of the Devil in them and to lead to Godly

1. The basis of Kabir's belief was not, as has been commonly supposed, Vaishnava Bhakti or Sufism but tantric Yoga.

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and noble lives. Islam shows deep concern with the mode of living in this world. The actions of all human beings are held subject to divine judgement and they are told that they will reap rich rewards (seat in Paradise) or punishment (seat in Hell) in accordance with the way they acquit themselves during their stay in the world. As the universe has a beginning, it must also have an end and the end will come with the Day of Judgement. Another important principle of Islam is the equality of all human beings, which in fact is a necessary corollary from its doctrine of strict monotheism.

The idea of Guru Nanak about the unity of God-head had Islamic emphasis. He recognised the one God alone and even regarded the ideas of incarnations and images as a negation of His One-ness. But the total view of Supreme Being was not identical with the Islamic concept of the same. Guru Nanak's God was both transcendant and immanent. He dwells in everything living and non-living and this being so, they were all believed to contain within them a spark of divinity a belief not shared by Islam. The difference in approach was responsible for the differing views in the two cases regarding the ultimate destiny of man, reunion with the Lord according to Guru Nanak and admission into paradise according to Islam. Difference of outlook is also to be seen in regard to the root of evil. Whereas Islam attributes it to the Devil or Satan in man as its primary cause, the Guru regards Haumai as the source of five evil impulses (lust, anger, greed, worldly affection and pride) as also the mother of three Gunas (Satawik, Rajas, Tamas). The differing approaches were reflected in the respective views of Islam and Guru Nanak on the nature of worldly life. Both took a positive view of the matter and attached great importance to the living in the midst of society without shirking the consequent responsibilities. Yet a great divergence marked the view-points. Islam accepted the world as such and did not look upon it as a place to run away from. If due attention was paid to the morality of conduct, the life on earth could be envisaged as an opportunity for elevation. According to Guru Nanak, though the world was not a place to run away from, the element of Maya (attachment) found in abundance in it was certainly something from which one must abstain.

There were also a few other points distinguishing the thinking of the Guru from Islam. He was a believer in the Law of Karma and transmigration of soul. Islam attaches great importance to the need of good deeds but does not view it as a determinant of any cycle of birth and death. Guru Nanak recognised God and His creation both as infinite, but Islam makes a distinction accepting God alone as such. Guru Nanak does not recognise the concept of Prophethood enabling Mohammad as the soul channel of communication between God

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and man rather he believes in bringing man face to face with God without rejoining the help of any mediator.

Regarding the mode of worship, Guru Nanak did not care for the observance of a formal religious discipline, as he did for the actual conduct based on the cultivation of such virtues as love, devotion, purity etc. But both attached great value to collective worship, though the modes of this were not identical. Guru Nanak was very close to Islam when he emphasised that all people are equal in the eyes of God. On the whole, we can say that the approach of Guru Nanak was more spiritual than moral, whereas that of Islam was more moral than spiritual.

But no account of Islam can be complete without taking into consideration the thinking of the Muslim Sufis. Since the advent of the Muslim Turks in the beginning of the eleventh century, several Sufi Silsilas had come into being. Guru Nanak had meetings and discussions with many eminent sufi Leaders of his time and with some of them he had even intimate friendship. This fact has led certain writers to see in such of Guru's institutions as Sangat Pangat and Kirtan a measure of influence of the Sufi Khanqah, particularly the Chisti one at Pakpattan. The sufis were great spiritualists. At their hands the spiritual side of Islam was immensely enriched. They accepted God as transcendental and immanent reality. The creed of the sufis laid down a path of spiritual progress marked by Shariat, Tariqat, Marafit and Haqiqat. A parallel is sometimes drawn between these sufi stages of spiritual development, and Guru Nanak's fives stages of Dharm Khand, Gian Khand, Saram Khand, Karam Khand and Sach Khand given in the 'Japji'.

But on close examination it will be seen that the similarity between the two is only of the limited character. They both relate to the domain of spiritual development and thus a measure of similarity between them is inevitable, but on the whole the two conceptions are not identical and differ in so far as they spring from different assumptions as far instance, in the Khands of Guru Nanak, there is nothing corresponding to the sufi Muqaims such as Shariat (observance of the five fundamentals of Islam namely Kalma, Nimaz, Roza, Zakat & Haj) tariqat which is also related to Shariat Nasut (sensuality) etc. The Janamsakhi accounts of Guru Nanak agree that the Guru had respect for high moral and spiritual character of the Sufis. They led married lives like ordinary people and yet were able to live piously. All this was in line with the thinking of the Guru who compared the ideal life to a lotus flower which while growing in water remains unaffected by it. He, however,

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showed much greater sense of social commitment than was to be found in the Sufis.

The view lately made much of, that the Guru's vision was entirely Hindu and that there was no Islamic influence in him, fails to explain why it was absent when Islam had existed in India for the past several centuries and held a position of great power and prestige and when the Guru had personal meetings and discourses with so many Muslims and travelled so widely in Muslim countries.

Another view, that Guru Nanak owed some of his beliefs to Islam and some to Hinduism, errs in the assumption that his thought had no real originality about it and was a collection of borrowings from different sources, mainly Hinduism and Islam, intelligently pieced together and presented in the easily understood language of the people; so that whatever newness it possessed was here on account of the new synthesis that was evolved out of the welding together of the diverse borrowed elements. If the former view is unhistorical, the latter view is too facile to be accepted in the use of a mystic and religious thinker of the calibre of Guru Nanak. At the same time, it would be incorrect to rule out entirely Hindu and Islamic influences on the Guru. If we study his works, one thing which strikes us the most, is the divine inspiration underlying all his writings. His authority is neither the Hindu nor the Muslim scriptures, but the divine light enshrined deep within him. The chief source of knowledge for him was his intuition. Thus the truth imparted by him was the truth as perceived by Him, or as he often puts it, revealed to Him by God Himself. But while disseminating that truth, he moved among people both Hindus and Muslims, read their books closely, exchanged his ideals with their leaders of thought and could not be unaware or insensitive to the conditions prevailing around him. It was in this way that the Hindu, Muslim and several other influences worked on him.

A critical appraisal of the relations of Nanakism vis-a-vis different religions in India of Guru Nanak's time leaves no doubt that Guru Nanak's religion is a distinct one. It is certainly wrong to say that the Guru attempted to establish a religion commingling the higher elements of Hinduism and Islam. The foregoing discussion has made it amply clear that Guru Nanak's approach and ideas were set in different frame-work. Nor is the statement of Toynbee that Sikhism was the work of ex-Hindu religious inquiror who adopted monotheism and rejected caste-system under the inspiration of Islam appropriate. That Guru Nanak rejected caste-system under the inspiration of Islam does not seem to be correct particularly in the context of the Sant tradition and Nath tradition whose central theme

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was also this. Similarly, the Guru's thought-pattern was quite different from Nath tradition and Sant tradition, as also from important Brahmanical or non-Brahmanical cults.

We, however, do not deny that different religious sects were important environmental factors but other factors, such as sociological, political and even economic too went a long way in shaping the Guru's views. Even their impact was not direct. The Guru, like a true artist, perceived them and correlating them to his own vision, gave his programme. Thus Nanakism was creative origination, the scientific approach to the basic problems of mankind, the rationale of life, and certainly it did not involve any synthesization.

WAS GURU NANAK A REVOLUTIONARY OR A REFORMER ?

As a reply to this question, different opinions have been expressed. I.B. Bannerji is the chief protagonist of this view that Guru Nanak was a reformer. According to him Guru Nanak did not attack the fundaments of the Hindu society—rather in the fundamentals of his teachings, he differed very little. He did not reject or abolish caste-system. "He simply warned his listeners that exclusive reliance on caste was absolute foolishness". If we want to understand the attitude of Guru Nanak it seems essential that we should recognise a distinction which is very easily lost sight of the distinction between caste and caste pride." As best he used his lash vigorously on the pride of caste and the pride of name but his remarks hardly entitle as to conclude that he wanted a total destruction of the entire social system. In fervour of proving his contention, I.B. Bannerji under-rates that "Gurdas remarks that Guru Nanak had reduced the four castes into one", and held that "all that Bhai Gurdas meant is that Nanak had brought men belonging to all the four castes under the protection of the same true God and the name".

Similarly I.B. Bannerjee opines that "Nanak's denunciation of sacred thread, pilgrimages, fasts and penances, is not directed against the customs and the basic beliefs of the Hindus but against the perversions that these things produced in proud and hypocrital minds. In fact Mohsan Fani speaks of a disciple of Guru Hargobind, Sadha who gave his sacred thread to serve him as a belt."

Similarly the attitude of Guru Nanak towards pilgrimages, fasts, and penances was condemnatory only in the limited sense, that is to say he did not plead the rejection of these things—rather he laid emphasis on the purity of mind while under-

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taking these practices. He did not enjoin upon his followers that they should not fast or go on pilgrimages. What he really wanted them to understand was, that as compared to devotion and love for God, these practices renunciation, rites, and formalities had little value.

Likewise when Guru Nanak challenged the sacred position of the Hindu divinities and avtars, he did not mean any disrespect to them. In fact Guru Nanak does not deny the missions of prophets and holy persons. On one occasion we are told that many such came into the world, started many religions, served the one Lord who is the God of all and departed after playing their respective parts. And as regards divinities we should not forget that Guru Nanak does not reject them altogether. 'It thus appears that what Guru Nanak did not deny the place to the divinities themselves but rather to those who allowed them to obscure the vision of the Lord and worshipped them exclusively in utter ignorance or disregard of true one Himself.'

Similarly in his attacks on Vedas or Puranas or Kuran, Guru Nanak did not question the wisdom contained therein. "Nanak had no mercy for men who had no real devotion and piety but still prided on their knowledge of the sacred texts, for those who considered reading of those texts by itself a greatly meritorious act." Such persons were told plainly that the reading of Vedas was secular occupation of, and not a religious practice. According to I.B. Bannerjee "the apparent inconsistencies would automatically disappear if we could once realise the difference between an attack on scriptualism and one on the scriptures themselves." In the opinion of Dr. Bannerjee Guru Nanak attacked scriptualism and not scriptures.

Besides, the protagonists of this view plead that some of the great tenets of Nanak's creed were identical with those of Bhakta. The idea of supreme God—His Immanence and transcendence, on which Guru laid great emphasis was not new to the Hindu world of his time. According to Dr. Radha Krishnan, even Ramanuj believed that God is both transcendent and immanent. Similarly the surrender of human will to the Divine Will was simply the repetition of the old doctrine of 'Prapti'. Belief in Karma, Transmigration of soul, Guru-Bhagti, emotional worship and service of God had all been emphasised earlier by the Hindu saints. Moreover, the inclusion of the compositions of Bhaktas in Adi Granth also leads to the conclusion that close kinship exists between the teachings of Nanak and those of Bhaktas.

Thus, in the words of Payne whose views have been elaborated by I.B. Bannerjee Guru Nanak's aim was not to

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sweep away Hinduism but to restore it to its ancient purity. Like Luther, he came to protest—to protest against idolatory, the blind superstitions and the empty rituals which had so long estranged vision from morality and the hearts of men from their creator. I.B. Bannerjee says "Sikhism no doubt, had its start in a protest but it was a protest against conventionalism and not against Hinduism. In Nanak, perhaps, the reaction reached its limits and thus gave a poignant tone to many of his utterances which at first sight gave the impression that his was a destructive and revolutionary ideal. But there is no satisfactory evidence to show that he intended to over-turn the social order. He had realised that ignorance and strife from which his contemporaries suffered was due primarily to the fact that form had supplanted spirit. The Guru was out not to kill but to heal, not to destroy but to conserve."

Our study of Guru Nanak leads us to the conclusion that he was a revolutionary. By 'Revolution is meant great reversal of conditions or turning over in mind'[1], Webster New Dictionary also says like that. According to Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences Revolution was a sudden and far reaching change, a major break in the continuity of development.[2]

Nanakism as it had been seen in the foregoing section was a distinct religious ideology, a creative origination. Nathism, Brahmanism, Vaishnavism, Islam, all these religions had their own ethics, and it would be absoutely incorrect to regard Nanakism either as a copy of any of the faith, or an attempt to make a few reforms in Hinduism. Guru Nanak nowhere states that his mission is to reform Hindu Society alone. Had it been so, the Guru would have not held discourses with the Sufis or gone to Muslim Central Asiatic countries to disseminate his message or made comments on Muslim precepts and practices. In fact the Guru had its own vision. His connotation of Shabd, Guru and Name had distinct character. His concept of Hukam was neither semitic nor that of Bhakta; it had three adjuncts, namely Name, Grace and Karm and in its effect, it lent dynamism to the society.

Guru Nanak condemned caste-system because it served as the backbone of the Hindu religion, and Hindu society. The Guru's condemnation was unequivocal. Dr. I.B. Bannerjee's contention that the Guru was against caste pride and not against caste-sytem is, at best, an exercise in the art of hair-splitting on this point; because the Guru's views vis-a-vis castes leave no doubt regarding the position of caste in

1. Oxford Dictionary.
2. Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences.

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his scheme of things. In fact, caste system is anti-thesis of a monotheistic religion.[1]

So was the Guru's attitude towards pilgrimages, fasts and penances. These were rejected and condemned because they had negative value and unnecessary hurdles on the pathway to Bliss.

Similarly the Avtars and divinities were not given any place by the Guru. We fail to understand what the learned doctor Bannerjee meant while saying that the 'Guru did not mean any disrespect to them.' Obviously the 'Guru being a man of culture did not show any disrespect; but he showed no respect either. Nor a few verses in Guru Nanak's compositions show that the Guru did not recognise them at all, so far his own religious ideology was concerned. In fact the Guru had its own vision of monotheism. His connotation of Shabd, Guru and Nam had distinct character. His concept of Hukam was neither semitic, nor that of Bhakta (Divine Will), it had three adjuncts; Nam, Grace, and Karm and in its effect it lent dynamism to the society.

Dr. Banerjee's assertion that the tenets of the Guru's creed were identical with those of Bhaktas is untenable. Guru Nanak's monotheism was pronounced and marked involving total elimination of incarnations and subordinate dieties. The Bhaktas, in general, were far less insistent in this regard. The Bhaktas copious use of mythology and tradition kept the door open for many gods and observance of idolatrous rituals. Karma theory and the concept of Divine Will were also subjected to new connotation by the Guru. Bhaktas did not repudiate asceticism while the Guru was uncompromising in its opposition to it. Caste system, no doubt, was attacked by the Bhaktas but it was left to the Guru to found a casteless society. The Guru rejected vedic authority of Vedas, while the Bhaktas did not. Even Sant tradition which was the latest development of Indian religious tradition differed from Guru's views in more than one respect.

In the same way the Guru did not recognise the authority of any sacred text. He repudiated Veda as also Koran. He regarded self-revelation as the sole inspirer. This being so, I.B. Bannerjee's opinion that the Guru condemned scripturalism and not scriptures has no alibi.

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1. Castes are folly, names are folly,
All creatures have one shelter, that of God.
Hereafter neither man's name nor his caste shall be considered.
In the supreme state are seen no castes or caste marks.

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Guru Nanak's religion had definite and positive points which emphasise its revolutionary character.

On socio-economic place Nanak had a clear picture of society in his mind. Nanakism, unlike other prevalent Indian religions, had positive social content, which did not exclude even the political aspect of the society. Nanakism was not a protest but a revolutionary retort against the enormity of spiritual obscuratism, superstition-ridden, caste-riven society debased by meaningless rituals totems and esoteric practices. His was a society which was egalitarian and based on three postulates viz., Meditation on Nam, sharing of wealth with the needy and doing honest creative labour. The political framework of such a society was the rule wedded to Truth which in Guru Nanak's connotation was an integrating or a progressive force. The aim of the society was to bring about a metamorphosis of a man so that he might grow to be a model man or a True Sikh or Gurmukh.

Caste system did not find place in Guru's concept of society. In this society, sex differences can find no niche. Indu-Bhushan's assertion "that Guru Nanak was against caste-pride and not against caste-system as such is, at best, an exercise in speculation because Guru Nanak's point of view pertaining to caste becomes crystal clear if we caste but only a cursory glance on his verses."

The Guru did not regard world as vertable hell or life, as something futile or the effect of the first sin. The people are enjoined upon by Nanak to lead their lives in fulness and not in parts. Each one is advised to abide pure amid the impurities of the world. But never renounce the world. Body was considered to be temple of flesh to house mind or to express it otherwise, body was regarded as microcasm of macrocasm. Guru Nanak's renunciation of asceticism was a significance breach with Indian religious tradition. Religion for house-holders had, of course, been distinguished from religion for sanyasis from times immemorial; but religious teachers always played the role of ascetics guiding their followers from a distance. It was not recognised that the Guru and the Chelas could form an integrated community.

Guru Nanak's preference for householder's life was indicated by his settling down at Kartarpur and also by his choice of Angad, a house-holder with wife and children as his successor in preference to his own eldest son, Sri Chand whose character was marked by the other-worldliness. It was a revolutionary as also a decisive step. By having shut the door to ascetics the Guru made Sikhism a householder's religion in

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a special sense. The Guru lived the same life as their disciples did; they shared their joys and sorrows. The human side of their character gave a new tone and intensity to their spiritual solidarity within the community.

The Guru recommended a particular set of attitudes for a member of his society. Apart from effecting self purification, one should devolop certain social attitudes i.e. to say that one should not consider oneself as a puppet in the hands of God, on the other hand, one should consider oneself as microcasm of macrocasm and do one's best to improve the Garden of the world or the dwelling place of God as Guru Angad would have as believe. Even to attain salvation out of the context of the world is of no service to the development of universal brotherhood. One should resist all types of exploitation—political, social, economic and intellectual. The Guru condemned in unequivocal terms the hoarding or accumulation of wealth because it cannot be done without ceasing to be virtuous or without committing sins and social evils. Even the hoarding on the part of state is a sin if the people do not get all the amenities of life they have a claim to. Whatever the profession—farming, shopkeeping, service—one must not ignore the need for pure mind and good actions.

In the society as envisaged by the Guru, sex prejudices or difference on this account were not recognised. The woman has the soul as the man and thus she has an equal right with man to grow spiritually, politically and socially. In this respect it will be quite fair to say that Guru Nanak conceived a picture of New type of Ladyhood wherein Woman would be co-partners in building new social edifice.

What should be social attitude to sufferings—individual as well as social ? What should one do while coming face to face with sufferings ? The Indian attitude before the Nanak was of gross indifference or of escapism or of withdrawing from the world and passings one's days in some cave or cell in some lone area. The Guru does not like this type of attitude.

There is no doubt that the annulment of suffering and the attainment of bliss or supreme joy in the goal of human endeavour but one should not be indifferent to the sufferings of the world and of the suffering which tyrants and evil-minded persons inflict on humanity. The Guru himself was deeply sensitive to the sufferings of men, of a colossal tragedy which has gripped our nation. But such suffering instead of remaining merely individual and meaningless must by the man of God, be made meaningful and creative in the sense that by owning suffering, the man of God must help the Good to prevail, must put up resistance to evil and induce in others the attitude of mind to do likewise.

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Gurbachan Singh Talib beautifully elaborates this idea. He says "Herein we are on a ground familiar to the modern man, though not to the medieval man in India. The saints and sages of India held better the purely individualistic attitude of gaining personal merit, or thought only in terms of ritual actions of approved character. Political and such issues had never been thought of; resistance to tyrants was a concept which simply did not exist except perhaps on individualistic basis as the wreaking of personal vengeance. The attitude of mind which counts martyrdom was not quite familiar in those times. As a matter of fact, the term so far as the Indian people are concerned, gained currency only in the wake of martyrdom suffered by the fifth and ninth Gurus of the Sikhs—Arjan Dev and Tegh Bahadur and later by large number of those who followed Guru Gobind Singh. As a matter of fact, it was the Sikh teaching stemming from the vision of Guru Nanak which extended the meaning of morality so as to take it out of merely personal piety and intimate relationships to embrace the operation of the conscience in relation to matters touching the widest social relaionships."

Apart from the radical differences between Nanakism and Hinduism or other religious faiths, there are significant facts which go to show how serious the Guru was in giving shape to his views and getting them perpetuated.

The first fact was the establishment of Langar. Apart from its religious importance it strengthened the trends towards the development of new social structure. What we call dignity of labour was promoted and individual's responsibility for contributing to social welfare was emphasised. All those who come to take their food in the Langar had to take it together irrespective of caste or creed. It was a direct blow at the caste sytem. It was also a direct incentive to the promotion of fraternity and social solidarity.

The second fact was the establishment of the institutions of Sangat and Guruship. Both these institutions epitomised the Guru's intention of giving his followers an organisational solidarity and educating them in respect of Nanakism—which could not but draw a line of clear distinction between them and other creeds. There was no analogous development in any of the sects founded by Bhaktas or within the fold of orthodox Hinduism. Similarly with the nomination of the successor to the Guruship, the Guru assured the continuity of centralised spiritual leadership, which contributed a lot towards the

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moulding of the Sikhs into an integrated community. This was certainly a revolutionary step which was neither anticipated nor followed by any other medieval reformer.

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that the Guru Nanak's message was not only new but also contained progressive content. It started not as a protest but as a revolutionary retort and till todate its tenor is the same. No wonder those persons who have come under its impact are dynamic and sensitive to the progressive calls.

PLACE OF GURU NANAK IN HISTORY

Writing about the person as Guru Nanak was, Macleod says "The impression which emerges is that of a deep devout believer absorbed in meditation and rejoicing in the manifestations of the divine presence, but refusing to renounce his family or his wordly occupation. Discipline there certainly was but not renunciation and total withdrawal. The impression is also that of a revered teacher giving expression to his exprience in simple direct hymns of superb poetic quality. Around him would be gathered a group of regular disciples, and many more would come for occasional darshan, or audience, with the master. And the impression is that of a man, gentle and yet capable of sternness, a man of humour and mild irony who could nevertheless reprimand and if necessary denounce, a man who experienced the unexpressible and who yet maintained an essentially practical participation in the every day affairs of his community and of the world beyond it." From the account narrated in the foregoing pages we gain impression that Guru Nanak had a mission and the necessary determination to see that the mission was put into practice. This being so, he was bound to play his role in the history of mankind much more in the history of the region where he grew up and where he finally settled.

Guru Nanak's vision was as vast as the whole humanity. He saw for himself humanity strife-riven and divided into different social and religious compartments on the frivolous bases of caste, creed, clime, colour and coat. The idea of the brotherhood of mankind did not claim any respect from the people. Moreover, the people were steeped deep in superstitions empty rituals and unmeaning ceremonies. Minds of the people by and large were fettered. This being so, the people were not in a position to make onward march in their evolution. The Guru's message in this context was unique; it was comprehensive and all embracing. It gave new massage to the people, the

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message of brotherhood of man, that of their capability to realise this thing in their work-a-day like. To achieve this aim, he evolved suitable strategy. He established requisite institutions to give local habitation to his ideas as also to preserve them. The institutions of *langar* and *pangat* are cases in point. Thus the Guru's role, in this respect, was that of a creative genius who by his example and preachings, articulated the masses to awaken to new realities and new heights.

Religion by definition, is a programme to integrate the people in the bonds of harmony, love and respect for one another. When religion declines, it has always become an aggregate of superstitions, rituals and ceremonies. It ceases to be an integreting force; rather it hampers and hinders the progress and extinguishes the spark of social dynamism without which no nation, much less individuals, can progress. Guru Nanak seemed to comprehend the importance of religion both as a lever of progress and when degenerated as a means of impeding the progress. He, therefore, advised the people to shed off the useless accretions to their religions and to understand their true messages. He denounced all those people who upheld, in religions, the unnecessary and useless precepts and practices. He himself declared, he is neither Musalman nor a Hindu. He is a man committed to truth. He admonished the Hindus as also the Muslims who were engrossed in mud-slinging on each other's religion. He rediculed and exposed the hypocrisy of the priestly classes of both the main religious groups of the country—Hindus and Muslims—and underlined the need of that social order wherein truly religious things should enjoy the respect of the people as a whole. In a way the Guru gave a new social philosophy of evolving a multi-national society. This idea was certainly a revolutionary one in the context of the contemporary society—even in reference to the modern society.

The Guru was not a political leader in the sense we understand today or in the sense people understood then; but he was certainly not insensitive to the political happenings around him. He writhed with pain at the unjust and foolish acts of the contemporary kings. He did not relish the foreign invasions and the cowardice shown by the people in submitting to them. He was deeply moved at the tyrannous march of the Mughals and the havoc they wrought upon the Punjab, especially upon the city named Sayyad Pur (Eminabad) and expressed his agony in his composition entitled 'Babar Vani' which is in fact a soulful lament of the Guru at the cruelties perpetrated by Babur.

That shows with what intensity and concern, the Guru witnessed the political events being enacted on the stage of

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contemporary India. In view of this, he can be ranked among the greatest of patriots of this country; but his patriotism flowed from his world vision and not vice-versa. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things to assume that he was the first revered leader who put premium always on the moral content and would advise his followers to assess everything in terms of moral values. Thus if he commented on the sad political affairs and did not forbid his disciples taking part in political affairs, it does not mean that he permitted political permissiveness—rather he tethered the politics of his disciples to the pegs of morality. In this way he propounded a relatively new doctrine that politics should be based on morality and it should not be only a hand-maid of Satan or degenerate persons. Against this background, the Guru favoured the extirpation of the evil-minded persons (Asursanghar).

The Guru's teachings, gave birth to Panjabi Nationalism. The Hindus, the Muslims and other social groups, under the impact of the Guru, began to realise that the truth belonged to all and it was not the monopoly of any one religion or social group. This awareness brought many of them near to one another, thereby causing Panjabi nationalism to take birth. This is why that most of the scholars think that the history of the Panjab began to take shape only after the advent of the Guru Nanak. But certainly the Guru's aim was not circumscribed to the emergence of Panjabi Nationalism. He had a wider aim of uniting the people of the whole world on the basis of his programme. This Panjabi Nationalism was the expression of Guru Nanak's impact on a regional level.

Guru Nanak's work was so significant that it did not leave the march of civilization, a social phenomenon bigger than that of nationalism or regionalism—untouched. Civilization declines if the institutions upholding it go inert and cease to be tractible. Hindu civilization which determined to a large extent the social and religious patterns in this sub-continent was heading fast towards it decline and fall because of its rotton institutions and the absence of any creative genius to revitalise them or to give new directions to them. Similarly Islamic civilization upto Guru Nanak's times had fallen to the evils which often sap the vitality of any civilization. The humanizing effect of this civilization had vanished and it had assumed the function of Islamic Imperialism. Guru Nanak did his best to remove the clogs from the wheels of the aforesaid two civilizations by establishing new institutions and performing himself the duties of a creative genius. Sikhism was certainly an attempt to ensure the onward march of the civilization and there is no wonder, the Sikhs, even today, are exerting their utmost to contribute their mite to this sphere. In this context, Guru Nanak ushered an ocume-

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nical epoch with the whole world as its base. He showed us how the churches of East and West could not only come close to each other, but could unite and co-operate in the spirit of justice and truth and thus create unity in diversity. He could sit with a Muslim and pray with him. He could sit with a Vaishnava Hindu and could sing with him. Wherever he went, he met people of all shades and all types. He oriented human passion with tender kindness.

The Panjab like the rest of India was in the throes of frustration which was caused partly owing to her defeats at the hands of the foreigner partly because of the rude shock they had met in the wake of the inability of their ancestral faith, to stem the tide of Islam and Islamic culture and partly by the impact of Samkhya philosophy. Guru Nanak understood the crisises gripping Indian mind. He, accordingly, strived to bring about a change in their attitude. He rejected other-worldliness and asceticism as the basis of life and also as the true path to Bliss. He regarded life as the top creation of God and the world the nicest place to live in. He called this world as 'Great Garden of God' and the man as microcasm of Macrocasm. Activities of the world were regarded as 'must' by him. Activities would not cause degeneration of man only if they were done honestly without exploiting anyone and with full faith in God and God's scheme. He fixed new goal before the people, the goal of establishing global society on the basis of social equality, honest creative labour and faith in oneness of God. The precepts of social equality and honest creative labour naturally evoked new aspirations and hopes among the majority of the people, and they began to view the future with hope, confidence and optimism.

As a result of all this, pessimism began to give way to robustness and the spirit to do and dare. The fruition of this type of teaching took place in the time of Guru Gobind Singh when the confectioners, washermen and others who had never touched the hilt of the sword became daughty warriors. In the same way, the creation of the Khalsa, the vanguard of the humanity committed to establish brotherhood of mankind, marked the culmination of the philosophy of Idealism-Energism as preached by Guru Nanak.

Nanak, as a force or spirit, has always been playing its part in history. During the later Mughal period, when Banda Bahadur ousted the Mughal Government from Sirhind, he struck a coin which bore an invocation to God and statement expressing that "the sword of Nanak guarantees boons of everykind and to everybody". His seal also bore the impact of the Guru.

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In the life and death struggles of the Sikhs against the Mughals, the sacred name of Nanak was frequently referred to for inspiration and by way of the determination of the Sihhs to put the ideas of the Guru into practice. The Sikhs in their prayer, the second part of which, is, to all probability, a composition of the later Mughal period, invoked the name of Guru Nanak for optimism and for guaranteeing welfare for all.

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EXPANSION and Consolidation of Sikhism

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Chapter 6

GURU ANGAD DEV

(g. 1539; d. 1552)

LEHNA TO ANGAD

Bhai Lehna, who became Guru Angad, was the son of a petty treder, named, Pheru. Born on March 31, 1504 in the village named Harike in the Ferozepur district, he grew to be a man of religious disposition under the influence of his mother, Dayabai and took special pleasure in his devotion to Durga, the Goddess of Shakti, and consort of Lord Shiva. When he came of age, he was married to a lady called Khivi. The lady belonged to matte-di-Sarai, the ancestrol village of Pheru. After some time, Angad's father having grown weary of his native village, decided to move to matte-di-Sarai. Shortly after the village was sacked by the Moghuls and Baloches who had come with Babur, and the family had to shift to Khadur beside the Beas, near Tarn Taran. Soon after, Pheru passed away and the entire burden of the family fell on Guru Angad.

While still a pious worshipper of Durga, he was once incharge of a group of pilgrims intent on visiting Jawala Mukhi, or 'Fire Mouth' a volcanic vent in the lower neighbouring Himalayas, from which flame came consecrated to the Goddess Durga. He was to have led Durga dance around the fire clad in a robe of office and in a harness of jingling bells. According to Archer, it seems Nanak, then living—had gone to firemouth to preach his Gospel to the Durga devotees on this festival occasion and Angad listened to the serman. He had known something of the Sikhs before this, in his own village and had been favourably impressed by a certain Jodha[1], a conscientious devotee very zealous at his 'morning prayer' and at quotations from the 'Jap ji'. He met Nanak himself at fire mouth and there and then he became a convert. The Sikh Sakhikars, however, say that Angad met Guru Nanak while on his way to Jawala Mukhi.

Whatever the case might have been, Bhai Lehna was altogether a changed man after his meeting with the Guru. He henceforward dedicated himself to the service of Guru Nanak and began to live at Kartarpur. Soon he succeeded in attaching himself to Nanak's personal staff. His devotion to Guru Nanak was so great that

1. A devotee of Guru Nanak who resided at Khadur.

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Budha, Sudhara, and others of Nanak's small community looked upon him as a good example. The whole hagiographical literature is replete with anecdotes bringing out his humility, spirit of service and that unquenchable thirst for truth and righteousness which must mark one on whom the holy office was to devolve. No dates can be ascertained as to when Bhai Lehna came to the Guru but obviously it must have been during the last few years of the Guru's life when his thoughts must have constantly turned on finding a proper successor to himself. From the accounts which have come down, the Guru's sons, esteemable men in a general way, did not come upto the measure of greatness and holiness[1] requisite in a fit successor to him. Bhai Gurdas has left an impression of the situation in the following lines of his poem :—

'The sons did not fulfil the Guru's behests.
They proved untractable and dis-obedient.'

The Guru's choice, therefore, fell on Bhai Lehna who had proved to be the fittest. Various tests to which Bhai Lehna was put to by Guru Nanak displayed his unshakable faith in the Guru and the three cardinal principles viz., complete devotion and obedience to the Guru, dignity of labour, and love for humanity which, in fact, beautifully sum up the teachings of Guru Nanak. Accordingly, Guru Nanak in token of having nominated him as his successor, placed a coconut and five paisa before him and gave him new name Angad (begot from the self), proclaiming "He, Lehna, had the same light and the same ways. The Guru merely changed his body."[2] This event took place on September 7, 1539.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE SIKHS

Importance of Angad's Nomination to Guruship

The nomination of Angad to the Guruship is a fact of profound importance in Sikh History. When Guru Nanak had stressed the indispensableness of the Guru, he was making no new departure, because this had been recognised by almost all the teachers of the medieval school; but the really vital moment came when he appointed a successor. By doing so, he made it clear that Nanak wanted that his ideals should strike roots among the people. Moreover, by nominating Angad as successor a precedent or tradition was established by virtue of which the Sikhs were integrated into a community under the un-interrupted leadership. In this context Trumpp is right when he says 'the disciples of Nanak would no doubt have soon dispersed

1. In Tikki Di VAR (coronation ode) it is stated that sons of Guru Nanak did not obey his words and had become rebels.
2. Var-Satta & Balwand.

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and gradually disappeared as well as the disciples of many other Gurus before Nanak, if he had not taken case to appoint a successor before his death.[1] Similary G.C. Narang points out, "Had Nanak died without a successor there would have been no Sikhism today or at best, simply another Kabirism."[2]

The continuing institution of Guruship affected Sikhism in another way also. It helped the Sikhs to integrate themselves as a distinct and self-conscious socio-religious community. Apart from the importance of nomination of a successor as stated above the Guruship acquired an impersonal character. In the coronation ode it is stated:—

Guru Nanak, in bowing to Guru Angad,
reversed the order of things.

....

He put his umbrella over the head of Lehna, who
then was exalted to the skies.

Guru Nanak's light blended with Guru Angad's
and Guru Nanak became absorbed in him.

The personality of the Guru was detached from the Guruship which was to be regarded as one indivisible and continuous. This was entirely a novel feature and it distinguishes Sikhism from similar institutions in other religions.

The Guruship having been the embodiment of the spirit acquired the character something sacred and infallible with the result that it exacted veneration—the fact which provided cohesion and ensured unity.

Dangers

However, after assuming the pontificate on the advice of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad left Kartarpur for Khadur where his wife and children were living presumably to avoid trouble at the hands of the sons of the Guru Nanak, and addressed himself to the task of consolidating the Sikhs and their faith forthwith. But the task was not an easy one. The Sikh community being infant, had to face a number of dangers. The most potent threat came from Hinduism. It is important to remember that Hinduism has no cut and dried creed and it never prescribed the same code of worship for everybody. Broadly speaking, the adhikara or aptitude has always been regarded as a factor in the prescription or Hindu religious duties and opinions have generally been tolerated almost to any extent provided certain social usages were not wantonly violated. Under the circums-

1. Trump, *Adi Granth*. ixxvii.
2. G.C. Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 15.

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tances it was not at all difficult for Hinduism to accommodate the followers of Nanak within its fold and absorb them totally in course of time, especially when Guru Nanak had concerned himself more or less with the fundamentals and had left the details to take care of themselves. Evidently special care was required to interpret and re-emphasise the message of Nanak in unambiguous terms and in a down-to-earth manner. Besides this the Guru had pointed out the uselessness of mere formalities and observances when they were divorced from the spirit but this was not enough. The supreme need of the moment was to clothe the message with distinctive emblems which might give it an individuality of its own.

The most serious challenge was posed by Siri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak. Though he was not an ambitious man yet he was the elder son of the Guru and a man of pious habits and there were many who believed that Nanak's place should go to him and thus they refused to accept Angad's succession. Besides this, Siri Chand founded a separate sect, known as Udasis, a community indifferent to the concerns of the world. Because of his being the son of Nanak, personal merits and the closeness of his thesis with the marrow-deep ascetic tradition of the country, he was making great impact on the masses, much more on the Sikhs, thereby causing a schism among the ranks of the followers of Nanak. Under such cicumstances constant vigil and a peculiar promptitude was needed to safeguard the interests on the Sikhs.

Not only this, priestly classes of the Hindus who had found in the teachings of Guru Nanak a threat to their vested interests and even to their existence as a class started opposing to the nascent Sikh movement. The activities of Vaishnavites, the worshippers of Durga and the jogies had not yet abated. They were still active in the propagation of their creeds.

The only silver lining in the cloudy atmosphere was the indifference of the Muslims and the state who were yet unconcerned with the affairs of the Guru whom they regarded as one of the many pious faqirs.

Personal Example

Notwithstanding the aforesaid handicaps, the Guru started his work of consolidation in right earnest which was obviously the preservation and propagation of the Sikh faith as propounded and preached by Guru Nanak. While doing so, the Guru was acting as a leaven so as to enable the people to grasp fully the implications of Guru Nanak's teachings and to mould their lives in their light—the step which was necessary before any tangible result could be achieved. This was the reason

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that the Guru spared no pains to preach Sikh ideology. He did so by setting up his own example and by taking various organisational steps. He lived Guru Nanak's tenets. He got up in the ambroisal hours and having taken a bath attended the Sangat (holy congregation) and listened to the recitation of Gurbani by the rebeck players.

After this, he removed the doubts of his disciples. Then he performed service in the Langar (free kitchen). Having taken meals he took rest. In the afternoon, he would chat and play with the children and encouraged the people to take physical exercise to build their body to preserve their health. In fact the keynote of the Guru's life was discipline, simran (meditation) and sewa (service). All these qualities shone with redoubled brightness because of the humility, characteristic of his demeanour and his love for the poor. Hagiographical literature furnishes us many examples.

Advice to Preachers and Followers

The Guru advised his followers to imbibe all the qualities and lead a disciplined life. One Mahna, who refused to serve the low-caste people was advised not to entertain such feelings because the house of the Guru is, in fact, the house of the poor. Similarly he was asked to serve the poor and the weak, instead of bullying them. Any delinquency on the part of a preacher was rarely tolerated.

Re-emphasising what Guru Nanak said

Guru Nanak's Gospel was preached vigorously and in order it might be embedded in the hearts of the people, Guru Nanak's words were often quoted. The Guru wrote only 62 sloks; but these represented neither the amplification of nor the deviation from the Nanak's teachings—rather a continuation of the tradition to lay still more emphasis. Yet the impression emerges that the Guru purposely avoided using images and examples which were not intelligible to the common stock of the people. Furthermore, he put forth his thoughts in a direct and straight manner without indulging in abstractness and speculative philosophy, obviouly to keep them within the range of comprehension of the common people. As for instance, when Guru Angad expressed his views regarding the world, he does not say 'True are the regions true are the universes' as Guru Nanak did, but puts it as 'the world is the dwelling place of God; He dwells in it.' But it should not be, in any case, lost sight of that Guru Angad never attempted to alter the programme as laid down by the first Guru. He, in fact, re-emphasised what Guru Nanak had said. He exhorted his disciples

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to have faith in the one-ness of the timeless, formless and Deathless God, the Guru, word; name or nam, the futility of the caste-system, the absurdity of the hyprocritical postures on the part of the jogies and votaries of other sects, the significance of the honest creative labour, and so on. Admittedly, certain important topics such as Sikh-point of view regarding Islam, Sufi, Sacred thread (Janeu) Sutak, death ceremonies etc. have not been discussed by Guru Angad in his compositions but it does not signify that he repudiated or did not have faith in the views expressed by Guru Nanak with regard to them.

In fact, Guru Nanak, in his compositions had expressed his views on almost all the essential topics in such an elaborate manner, that Guru Angad presumably, did not feel the necessity of writing again on all the topics. Whichever topics, he touched upon, it appears, he did so either to give vent to his poetic feelings or to re-emphasise whatever his mentor (Guru Nanak) had taught.

It was because of this that Bhai Gurdas describes the succession of Guru Angad as the lighting the lamp from another lamp.

Collection of the Hymns of Guru Nanak

Clear in his mind, regarding his objective, the Guru collected the hymns of Guru Nanak and committed them to writing. Several of these were said to have been handed over by him to Guru Angad, while the rest of them lay in possession of different persons. This step contributed a lot towards the consolidation of Sikhism. It saved the compositions of Guru Nanak from mis-interpretation and also laid the foundation of the Sikh scripture which the fifth Guru compiled and edited. It gave definiteness and distinction to the general ideas laid down by Guru Nanak as also a definite direction to the faith of the disciples. Morever, it provided a living proof of the Sikh doctrine that there was no essential difference between the Guru and his word (Shabd or Bani).

Thus there is no wonder that Guru Angad Dev assigned a very high place to Shabd—Word—so much so that he made practice of Shabd as the path way to salvation. In fact, Shabd was being given the rank of the Guru and certainly one can discern in these things the shape which Guruship was to have in the years to come.

Biography of Nanak

Besides this, it has been asserted by many eminent scholars that the Guru committed to writing the biography of Guru

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Nanak which is called Bhai Bala's Janamsakhi. Recent researches have shown beyond doubt that the above-referred Janamsakhi was written round about mid-seventeenth century and not during the period of Guru Angad's pontificate. But it is possible that the Janamsakhi alluded to by deep-rooted tradition might have been lost. Had this Janamsakhi been available to us, the step would have been monumental for two reasons viz the Sikhs could have got a sacred book of their own to serve as fount of inspiration for them and secondly it would have formed the first prose work in the Punjabi language.

Gurmukhi Script

The Guru, however, recorded everything in the script which was neither Urdu nor Devnagri but Punjabi, known as Gurmukhi. The script is generally supposed to have been invented by Guru Angad, but the fact that the time of his accession, Bhai Paira Mokha of Sultanpur was asked to transcribe the horoscope of Guru Nanak from Devnagri letters into Gurmukhi shows that these letters existed before Guru Angad. The recent researches have proved beyond doubt that the script was in vogue in some part of the Punjab. The Guru, however, modified the script.

We agree with Grierson that 'Landa' or clipped true alphabet of the Punjab existed in the time of Guru Nanak, but Guru Angad, finding it imperfect in vowel sounds, which were frequently omitted improved it by borrowing signs from the Devnagri alphabet and after polishing it named it Gurmukhi.[1] Since the Guru adopted modified alphabets, the people began to call it Gurmukhi—spoken through the mouth of the Guru.

Macauliffe also agrees with this view. According to him, Guru Angad deeming that the compositions of Guru Nanak were worthy of a special written character of their own, adopted and modified a Punjabi alphabet called Gurmukhi to give expression to what fell from Guru's lips. Having developed a suitable script, the Guru like Prof. Huxley did not consider it beneath his dignity to write primers for children and he accordingly composed a number of mottos and moral maxims which accompany the letters of alphabets.[2]

The significance of the adoption of the script by Guru Angad lies in this that he rejected the foreign Persian script. He realised that unless the people adopted a script which was

1. Grierson : Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. ix, part I, p. 624.
2. History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab.

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their own and which suited to their language, their culture could not grow. He condemned the adoption of foreign script by the Indians in the strongest term. Guru Nanak had condemned this practice before him in the following verse :

> "And men have changed their tongue and the Muslim way of greetings prevail" (Basant Handol M I Page 1191 of Adi Granth)

Furthermore, Gokal Chand Narang writes 'that the name of the script reminded those who employed it of their duty towards their Guru and constantly kept alive in their minds the consciousness that they were something distinct from the common mass of Hinduism'. Moreover, the popularisation of the script was 'well-calculated to make its readers part with Hindu compositions written in Sanskrit. There is a lot of difference between the Devnagri script and Gurmukhi script and a special effort is needed to read sanskrit. The result has been that in most cases Gurmukhi scholars have parted company with Sanskrit works.'

Apart from the results referred to above, this step gave a severe blow to the prestige of the Brahmins and their mystic supriority who, through their monoply of the knowledge of Sanskrit, had given currency to the belief that their superiority or prestige was ordained by God or Gods above.

Free Kitchen

The institution of Langar (free-kitchen) which was established by Guru Nanak was strengthened and popularised by Guru Angad Dev ji. He organised it more fully, personally seeing to the needs of the poor who came there and with great kindness served them meals, which were taken along with devotees and other visitors, caste being thus fully broken by all in the Ashram. The persons attached with the institution were advised to be polite, sweet and accommodating. Any one acting contrary to the instructions was clearly asked to mend his ways. Lest the dignity of labour and spirit of self-dependence loose their candour, the Guru's wife Mata Khivi worked day and night in the kitchen like an ordinary worker. The institution ran with the contributions made by the Guru's admirers and disciples. The Guru characterised the offerings for the Langar as a poison to himself and lived by twisting coarse turn made of 'munj'. As per rule, the food was served to the people sitting in a line (pangat).[1]

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1. The quality of food was also good. Rice boiled in milk (ਖੀਰ) and Ghi were served too often.

   Tikki Di Var Pauri 3
   Satta and Balwand—Var.

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This institution was of great significance. It went a long way towards erasing social and economic inequality; for every one, irrespective of caste and creed, social status, sex and birth was to sit and eat, along with others, the same food. Hence it served as a medium of social integration between the monarch and the commoner on one hand; and as a continuous reminder of the social equality on the other, thereby levelling a mighty blow to the caste-system and untouchability.

Thus, since it was to be run with the help of the contributions made by the Guru admirers, it had its effect on the method and modality of his followers so far as the charity was concerned. Henceforward, they began to think of stopping it to the corrupt and undeserving priestly class. Furthermore, it taught the sikhs the first lesson of contributing money towards a common fund for the common cause.

Moreover, it provided a powerful aid in the publicity work. The poor and helpless, simply appreciated the institution. To the Guru, the architect of it and the persons, intellectually awake and endowed with progressive outlook, it portended something new, beautiful and a right step to build egalitarian-spiritual society.

Sangat

Wherever Guru Nanak went he asked the people to establish Sangat. According to Teja Singh as many as 131 sangats were organised at his behest. Guru Angad continued the tradition initiated by his predecessor. Wherever he went he asked the people to coalesce themselves in Sangat. In his sermons also he eulogised the function of sangat in evolving the Sikh pattern.

He realised that one of the serious banes of Indian society was its individualistic character. He wanted the people to meet regularly on religious platform so that there might be greater understanding and fellow feeling among the various sections of the people.

This institution gave a sense of unity to the people which encouraged them to work for their own spiritual ascent in the context of society.

Udasism—An Anathema

The Guru, by his humility, tact and promptitude tackled the problem which sprang from the challenge of the Udasis. Baba Siri Chand, the elder son of Guru Nanak held strong belief in asceticism and renunciation (Udas) of the world as the correct pathway to Bliss and quoted Guru Nanak as the

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progenitor and upholder of this view. The view of Siri Chand was obviously a mis-statement of the Guru's Gospel. But Siri Chand's impact on the masses was quite deep. The reasons were not far to seek. Firstly, being the son of Guru Nanak and himself a pious man, he commanded the respect of the people. Secondly, except celibacy and asceticism, the other tenets of the udasis were the same as those of Sikhism and they regarded Nanak with the same veneration as the Sikhs did. Thirdly, asceticism or Udas was in accordance with the temper of the Indian people, who put a premium on asceticism and even to this day the life of a recluse is regarded as the most honourable of all human existences. All these facts made the challenge of Udasis formidable.

Any omission or indulgence on the Guru's part was bound to affect Sikhism adversely, because in case the philosophy of asceticism (Udas) had succeeded, the great aims of Sikhism to set in motion the process of rejuvenating and regenerating the people would have been defeated. Morever, the division in the ranks of the followers of Sikhism would have assumed a ghastly form and, in course of time, this infant faith might have disappeared as one of the many sects serving no useful social or religious purpose.

Accordingly, Guru Angad took prompt steps and made it clear in unequivocal terms to the disciples that Sikhism was essentially a religion of householders. It was also declared that the Udasis the followers of Siri Chand, even if they held faith in most of the Nanak's tenets, were not true Sikhs. Thus Guru Angad, by doing so, barred the door to asceticism and made the influences of Guru Nanak available not only for religious uplift but also for social regeneration.

This action of the Guru brought rich dividends. Udasism could not become the mass movement much less the part of Sikh movement. The little influence which still they had was eliminated by the constant endeavour of the later Gurus till Siri Chand wound up his order and merged it in the Sikh movement. Apart from it, the status awarded by the Guru to the life of a householder sounded new to the people who were accustomed to listening to Brahmins eulogising the life of an ascetic or recluse. No wonder, the Sikh masses began to drift away, in ideological sphere, from Hinduism.

Vigorous Preaching

The injunctions against Udasis was not the only thing the Guru did for the preservation of Sikh community. In fact, he took many other important steps to this purpose. He spared no pains to bring home to the people the importance of the teachings of Guru Nanak. He composed hymns in the language

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and style, intellegible to the masses, his compositions indulging very rarely in speculation and abstraction. He exhorted his Sikhs to follow the programme as followed by Guru Nanak at Kartarpur in their day-to-day life. He advised the preachers also to lead a disciplined life. Whenever there was a breach of discipline by anyone, the Guru took serious note of it. In this manner, a set discipline came to be introduced in Sikhism which saved Sikhism from possible disintegration.

The Guru was much particular not to allow any preacher or reciter of the words of the Guru to assume the character of the priestly class such as Brahmins etc. The incident of *Satta* and *Balwand*, the bards of the court of the Guru is a case in point. According to Macauliffe, two minstrels Satta and Balwand began to boast that it was on account of their skill in music that the Guru had grown popular. And to substantiate their boast, they began to absent themselves from reciting the hymns at regular hours. They were requested to attend sangat but they persisted in their attitude of defiance and at last Angad finished with them and made his own arrangments. The two minstrels soon realised the folly of their action and made repeated attempts to get reconciled with the Guru. The latter refused to relent because they had spoken arrogantly about Guru Nanak also. They had suggested that even the latters' court would not have been known without the music of Mardana. Guru Angad refused to entertain any further representation on behalf of minstrels by saying, "He would have the beard and moustaches of any man, who again spoke in their favour out off and his face blackened and he would have him mounted on a donkey and led in disgrace through the city."[1] In their extremity, Satta and Balwand appoached Bhai Ladha of Lahore, who had a great influence with the Guru. Bhai Ladha took up their cause and having shaved his head, blackened his face, and mounted a donkey with his face turned to the tail, went around the city of Khadur, and finally arrived in Guru's presence. The Guru could not resist the entreaties of his devotee and forgave the minstrels. They fell down at the feet of the Guru. They are said to have composed and sung the well-known Ode which with subsequent additions by the bards themselves was incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan Dev.

This incident highlights the fact that the Guru maintained perfect discipline at his court and was determined never to let the bards of the court assume the characteristic defiance and arrogance of the priestly class.

Guru Angad is said to have taken steps to start building a new town, Goindwal near Khadur. Amar Das, a devoted disciple, was appointed to supervise its construction. According

1. Macauliffe Max Arthur : *The Sikh Religion, Vol. II*, p. 23.

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to G.C. Narang, the construction of the city started in A.D. 1546 The step was in the right direction. It provided work to the unemployed and a city to the followers, who having gathered at one place, would be a great factor in the dissemination of the Guru's Gospel.

PHYSICAL CULTURE

Side by side the organisational steps as detailed above, the Guru paid full attention towards the physical culture of the Sikhs. He enjoined upon them to take full care of their bodies. To evince their interest in physical exercise, he got prepared a wrestling ground at Khadur. If the words of Confucious, that 'a journey of a thousand miles is started only with a step' are true, the Guru laid the foundation of the martial spirit which in the times of the sixth and the tenth Gurus blossomed into the Khalsa.

Suraj Prakash, on the basis of Sikh tradition gives the details of the meeting of Humayun with Guru Angad. Emperor Humayun, after his final defeat at Kanauj came to Khadur, enroute to Lahore, to seek the blessings of the Guru. When the Emperor reached there, the Guru was in trance and consequently the Emperor had to keep standing for some time. The haughty emperor took it as an insult that the Guru had not shown him due respect. Out of a fit of anger, he put his hand on the hilt of his sword. When the Guru's eyes opened, he saw the emperor trying to draw out his sword. The Guru said "when Thou aughtest to have used sword against Sher Shah, thou didst not do so. Now when thou comest among priests, instead of saluting them respectfully desirest to draw the sword on them." Humayun tendered apology and entreated for the blessings. The Guru prophesied that he would recover the throne but before that, he would suffer for some time because of his un-called for attempt to make an attack on him. There is no historical evidence to vouchsafe the truth of the above story; but at the same time it would be wrong to regard it baseless in the absence of any evidence contrary to this well-established belief. The event of course, enhanced the prestige of the Guru and the popularity of his Gospel.

ESTIMATE OF THE GURU'S WORK

From the aforesaid account, it emerges that the Guru was a fine character, of sterling piety and unflinching devotion. It also appears that he was a vigorous preacher and strict disciplinarian who had a keen sensitivity to perceive the psycho-social valuations of the people; and a peculiar sense of practicability to take immediate corresponding actions to keep the Sikh movement on the track.

Admittedly, Guru Angad's period was the most crucial one; for the movement was in its infancy and the dangers were

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serious and manifold. The credit certainly goes to the Guru for not only overcoming the dangers, but also succeeding in giving the movement a distinctness and definiteness, apart from effecting its consolidation. By popularising Gurumukhi script and closing the doors of Sikhism to the Udasis, he saved Sikhism from merging into Hinduism and his disciples from being absorbed into the Hindu masses. Not only this, the Sikhs began to assume something of a social character in addition to the religious ties that held them together. Thus we can henceforward trace two parallel developments in Sikhism. On the one hand the work began by Guru Nanak was earnestly continued and new religious ties were added one after the other; on the other hand there was manifest signs of drifting away from the orthodox Hindu society and attempts were made through innovations to bring into existence a new brotherhood, social as well as religious, self-sufficient and independent. Nevertheless, during the pontificate of the Guru, it was still doubtful whether the Sikhs had realised their separate entity, although there is no gainsaying the fact that it had started drifting away from Hinduism and any observer with a little common sense, could visualise the shape of things to come.

Guru Angad, finding his end approaching fast, nominated Amar Das as his successor. Herein also, he followed the example of Guru Nanak. He did not give guruship to any of his sons; his choice fell on Amar Das who had shown on more than one occasions, utmost devotion to him, piety and spirit of unselfish service to both the Guru and the people. The step like that of Guru Nanak was of great significance. Guru Angad passed away on March 29, 1552 at the age of forty-eight.

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Chapter 7

GURU AMAR DAS

(b. A.D. 1479; d. A.D. 1574)

Born in April 1479[1] at the village Basarke, Amar Das was the eldest son of Tej Bhan, who was a Terain Khatri by caste. At the age of 24[2], he married Mansa Devi and adopted his father's profession—viz agriculture-cum-trade. Amar Das was Vashnavite by faith and he used to pay annual visit to the Ganges. He also practised severe austerities to subdue his mind. While returning from his twentieth visit he was told by a monk that he could have no hope of spiritual ascent unless he had a Guru. This kindled a new desire in his reflective mind which found satisfaction in his brother's house. One morning, during ambrosial hours of the morning, his ears caught sweet strains of music coming from there. Sacred hymns of Nanak were being sung by Bibi Amro, the daughter of Guru Angad Dev ji, who was married to his brother's son. He requested her to take him to her father. She did accordingly. He was so much impressed by Guru Angad Dev that he was converted to be a staunch devotee of the Guru. Under the impact of the teachings of Guru Angad, Amar Das shed off his Vaishnavite prejudices for the use of meat and wrong notions of austerities. The best austerity, he was told, was to exert himself in the service of the people. He followed the instruction of the Guru in letter and spirit. He felt much pleased to fetch water and fuel for the common kitchen. Inspite of his old age and the superior social relation with the Guru, he took upon himself to do any odd job for the Guru and his Sikhs. According to Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, "he would daily bring water from the Beas, over three miles distant for the morning bath of the Guru."[3] He went on doing so for about eleven years (1541 to 1552). Once, in the month of January, 1552, when it was raining in torrents and it was biting cold outside, Amar Das set out as usual to bring water from the river. On his way back, he struck against a peg of Karir wood and fell down before the house of a weaver. The sound produced by the fall disturbed the family of the weaver and weaver's wife cried, "Ah, it must be that foot and homeless Amru who

1. *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, Sujan Rai text, p. 49.
2. *A Short History of the Sikhs, Vol. I*, Teja Singh and Ganda Singh.
3. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 20.

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revolves round the feet of the so-called Guru." The news reached the Guru who decided that Amar Das would no longer be homeless rather he would be a refuge to the homeless ones. He appointed him as his successor, in preference to his sons because he saw so great a contrast between his own sons' indifference and this aged disciple's tireless zeal. In March 1552, the succession ceremony was performed and the Guru placed five paisa and a coconut before Amar Das as a symbol expressive of passing of Guruship to Guru Amar Das and henceforward Amar Das would act as the Guru. As a matter of fact "His devotion, service and ability fitted him for the important duties of leading the Sikh church."[1]

Now Guru Angad asked Amar Das to repair to Goindwal. He himself had sufficient experience of the jealousy in which his successor would be held by his sons. To avoid direct clash he asked Amar Das to remain out of Khadur. Gonda the founder and owner of the village 'Goindwal' was a disciple of the Guru. The Guru had even helped him to found that village. He thought that Amar Das would be secure there. Besides, Goindwal was situated on the road from Lahore to Delhi and near a ford of the river Beas. By keeping a preacher there, many travellers would become acquainted with the teachings of Guru Nanak and thus an easy opportunity would be offered for the dissemination of the Sikh gospel. Amar Das, therefore, took his abode at Goindwal.

Guru Angad left this world on the 4th day of the bright half of the lunar month of Chet, in the year 1609 of Bikrami era. Just before the event was to happen, Amar Das summoned to the holy presence of the second Guru and was formally installed on the Gaddi with due ceremony. The second Guru made a present of five paisa to him, put a coconut in his lap and bowed to his feet in the presence of the whole congregation. Thus in the seventy-second year of his age, Amar Das was proclaimed the third Guru of the Sikhs.

Datu's animosity

At the investiture of Amar Das, Dasu and Datu the two sons of Guru Angad felt much upset and claimed that it was their hereditary right to assume the pontificate. On the advice of their mother, Mata Khivi, Dasu withdrew his claim; but Datu[2] remained adament and declared himself as the Guru. Guru Amar Das, with a view to avoiding any trouble, retired to Goindwal. Much enraged at this, Datu went to Goindwal and committed insane act of kicking him in the chest while he was giving instructions to the congregation. Guru

1. *Ibid.*
2. I. B. Banerjee : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I, pp. 165-6.

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Amar Das displayed extraordinary patience ond said, "O ! Honoured Sir, pardon me; my old bones must have hurt your tender feet.", and left Goindwal for his native village, Basarke.

Datu, however, could not convince the Sikhs of the legitimacy of his claim and in despair, left for Khadur. In the meantime, prominent Sikhs such as Bhai Budha etc. prevailed upon Guru Amar Das to return to Goindwal and resume his work.

Siri Chand's efforts to gain Guru Gaddi

Like Datu, Siri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak, also lay his claim to the Guru Gaddi on the plea that Guru Angad had got no right to appoint his successor and Guruship must revert to him automatically since it belonged to his father, who passed it on to Guru Angad without conferring on him the powers to pass it on to others. Siri Chand, partly because of his own piety and partly because of the general tendency on the part of the people to put a premium on celibacy and asceticism was attracting people towards him. According to Gokal Chand Narang, "the tide was turning in his favour and it required all the power and statesmanship of Amar Das to save the infant Church from an early death."[1] Happily for Sikhism, the old Guru rose to the occasion. The Guru appealed to the people by pointing out the example set by Guru Nanak himself to learn, "how one could live in the world and still not be of the world". According to Macauliffe circular letters were sent to the people enjoining upon them that asceticism was foreign to the creed of Guru Nanak.

In this connection, the author of Mehma Parkash relates that once a man named Gangu, enquired from the Guru as to which was the correct path to salvation. The Guru told him that he should start business at Delhi, earn his livelihood through honest means and give a part of it to the needy.

In this way, the Guru achieved a remarkable success in overcoming the danger from Udasis and their leader Siri Chand. This success was primarily due to the definite and firm stand taken by the Guru himself.

The step was, however, pregnant with far-reaching consequences. The Sikhs were separated from Udasis and thus raised above asceticism were free and fit to follow the course of national progress which depends alike on spiritual attainments and material uplift.[2]

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1. G. C. Narang : Transformation of Sikhism, p. 32.
2. G. C. Narang : Transformation of Sikhism, p. 33.

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Opposition of the Orthodox Muslims

Guru Amar Das, being a tireless and effective preacher, won over many converts. The city of Goindwal progressed, both as a secular and a religious centre. Many Muslims also settled there. They were snobbish and arrogant in their behaviour, because of their being members of ruling community. The Guru's soul-elevating teachings made no impress on them; on the other hand the increasing popularity of the Guru evoked jealousy among them. This being so, they were insolent to the Guru and his followers. In order to over-awe the Sikhs, they often broke the vessels, which carried water for the Guru from the Beas. When the Guru was told the story, he, out of his characteristic forbearance, advised his followers to use leather-vessels instead of earthen pitchers for the purpose. The Muslims, instead of realising their mistake, began to perforate the leather vessels with their sharp arrows. At this, the Guru asked his followers to use brass vessels. But even then, the mischief did not end. The Guru then calmed the Sikhs by uttering "the Sikhs turn a good deed even to those who do no good and God observes everything."

It is said that, after some time, a band of armed men reached there. The Muslims picked up a quarrel with them. In the fight the Muslims lost quite a few persons, including those who entertained animosity towards the Guru. According to Macauliffe, another event took place a few days after. The cash of Government treasury laden on mules was being taken to Delhi. Near Goindwal, a strong gale blew and the mules ran hither and thither. The escort accompanying the mules succeeded in finding all the mules except one. After a great deal of search, the missing one was also found with a Muslim of Goindwal who was reluctant to part with. Accordingly, the matter was reported to the Emperor, who issued orders that the culprits should be punished duly for their attempt to grab the Govenment money and causing a lot of inconvenience to the Government officials.

The aforesaid event worked upon the minds of the Sikhs in such a way that their faith in God and the Guru re-doubled which was of great benefit for the Sikh Movement.

Opposition of the Orthodox Hindus

The mounting popularity of the Sikh Movement with its emphasis on social equality and emancipation of the people from priest-craft and un-meaning ceremonies was ill-looked by the Hindus who instead of taking advantage of the social liberal religious policy of Akbar were once again engrossed in restoring the society based on caste system and stricken from various superstitious totems and many useless practices. Tulsi's Ram Charit Manas, which was the product of this trend among the Hindus, is a case in point. As a necessary corollary

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to this attitude, the Hindus found in Sikhism a unique development which was giving to Sikhism a distinct individuality and character for different from those of Hinduism. The Sikhs were enjoined upon by their Gurus to discard caste-system, ascetic view of life, untouchability and a host of gods and have faith in the unity of God-head and socio-spiritual equality among the people. The Hindus did not like, particularly two things viz., langar and construction of Baoli. They disliked the institution of langar because it demonstrated the equality of man between man on practical plane and thus gave a strong blow to the caste system which was considered to be the 'back bone' of Hinduism. Similarly the construction of Baoli at Goindwal provided water to the high and the low alike, giving scant respect to the untouchability and caste system. Moreover, the Guru advised his followers to consider it a place of pilgrimage for them. The idea was appreciated by the Sikhs, because at this centre they met one another in an atmosphere of spiritual and social equality.

The Brahmins and Khatries, the privileged classes of the Hindus who found Guru's teachings contrary to the interests of their class, began to conspire to denigrate him. They complained to Akbar that the Guru was extorting funds from them to maintain his 'court' but Akbar did not pay heed. They instigated the son of Gainda Marwaha[1] to lodge a complaint against the Guru with the Subedar of Lahore to the effect that he might be helped to get his land vacated from the Guru. Although the claim was unjustifiable because Gainda Marwaha, the father of the complainant being the staunch follower of the Guru, had invited the Guru himself to settle there; yet the case was pursued with temerity. According to Sikh tradition, Jafar Beg conducted enquiry into the case and decided the case in Guru's favour.

Gainda appealed to Akbar against the decision and, to impress upon him, he, accompanied by his servant, went to his court. But to his disappointment he was not given even audience of the Emperor and on the other hand, was given shoe-beating by the courtiers.

Guru has thus recorded the event in **Var Gauri :**

"The ungodly clothed the perverse (complainant) in blue and black rags full of lice and dirt. He was not

1. Marwaha or Merwaha—a Khatri clan belonging to the Sarain group and claiming a central Asian origin. "Their earliest traceable settlement is at Goindwal or Gondwal in Amritsar, which they say was made into a large place by one Baba Govind Rai, a devotee." (Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes, Vol. II, p. 524).

In Marwaha tradition we have an echo of the quarrel between the Sikhs and the Marwaha Khatris for supremacy at Goindwal.

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allowed even to approach, more filth was heaped upon him and the perverse man returned full of dirt, pure and simple. He was sent to backbite and slander others but there also the faces of both perverse men were blackened. At once the whole world knew that along with his servant, the perverse man got a sound shoe-beating till he was senseless. Now the congregation and his own relatives would not associate with him. He was secretly brought to his home by his wife and niece. He lost everything in this world and the next. He cried daily hungry and thirsty. Praise be to the Lord, the creator who Himself sat in righteous judgement. He who slanders the true Guru is destroyed by God. These words are inspired by Him who has created the whole world."

Shortly after, the enemies once again coalesced together and made a petition to the Emperor to the effect that the Guru was preaching against Hinduism. The Emperor invited the Guru to explain his case personally. The Guru, however, begged to be excused to do so on ground of old age and sent Jetha to deputise on his behalf. Jetha presented the case effectively and the petition of the opponents was dismissed. According to the author of Suraj Prakash 'The Emperor conveyed his message through Jetha to Guru Amar Das that he should pay a visit to the pilgrimage centres of the Hindus so that they might feel assured, and promised that in honour of his visit the Government would not charge any pilgrimage tax'. Macauliffe writes that, in consonance with the wish of the Emperor the Guru paid visits to Pahowa, Kurukshetra and Hardwar. At Kurukshetra, he met jogies, digambaris, sanyasis and men of the six schools and in course of conversation brougt home to them the central points of his teachings, condemning religious externalia & hypocrisy and upholding unity of God-head and universal brotherhood of man. He was accorded a rousing reception everywhere and people of Hardwar came out in hundreds to have his sacred glimpse.[1] The remission of pilgrimage tax heightened the prestige of the Guru and no wonder, the Guru began to be talked about as one possessing devine power.[2] Dr. I.B. Bannerjee agrees in as much as the visit of the Guru to Pehowa, Kurukshetra and Hardwar is concerned; but he[3] disbelieves that he was accorded a hearty welcome. We feel that

1. *Tukhari Chhant*, see Macauliffe Vol. II, pp. 112-14.
2. After he went to the Ganges and there was a marvellous scene. All were entranced on seeing the saintly Guru, and there took no one took half a dam from him. No one paid half a dam or put any money into the toll base; the toll collector's mouths were sealed they said Brethren, what shall we do? Of whom shall what ask? Everyone is escaping under cover of the Guru.
3. I. B. Bannerjee : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. I.

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the statement of Guru Ram Das that the people bubbled with warmth at his visit to the aforesaid places is sufficient to falsify the stand of Shri Bannerjee.

Santokh Singh and Macauliffe both say that the Guru visited the abovementioned places to fulfil the desire of Akbar and to please the Hindus, but the view is unfounded. Two reasons can be advanced to prove the hollowness of their view; firstly, it was contrary to Guru's teachings to go on pilgrimage and seconly there is sufficient internal evidence in the hymns of Guru Ram Das that Guru Amar Das went with the sole purpose of acquainting the people with his mission.[1] All the same, the visit to Hindu pilgrimage centres yielded high returns. The Guru's relations with the emperor enhanced the prestige of the Guru and we might agree with Panth Parkash that crowds of new followers came to him. The fact that a great number of those who were not Sikhs escaped pilgrims' tax contributed a lot towards the popularisation of the Sikh faith. Moreover, it helped in establishing the fact that the Sikhs occupied a position distinct from that of the Hindus, as the pilgrim's tax realisable from the Hindus was not realised from the Sikhs.

It is, indeed, laudable that the challenge could not wear the Guru down, rather it whipped up this zeal to bring the full weight of his energy and acumen to bear upon the course of development of Sikhism which was on the cross-roads. He not only saved Sikhism from accidents of history; but also did the necessary spade work to enable it to shape history.

EVOLUTION AND CONSOLIDATION

The process of consolidation of Sikhism reached a definite stage during the Guruship of Amar Das. Guru Nanak had condemned some of the social beliefs prevailing amongst the Hindus, as also among the Budhists and Jains. Guru Amar Das's achievement was that he constructed a fence around the sapling that germinated lest it should be destroyed by the gale of all consuming Hindu social practices. He achieved his object by strengthening the institutions of his predecessors, besides establishing new ones.

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1. Tukhari Chhant, see Macauliffe's Sikh and Religion, Vol. II, pp. 112-14. Mehma Parkash (in prose) does not mention any persuasion on the part of Akbar. 'Suraj Parkash' does mention it, but in it Akbar is said to have asked the Guru to pay the visit as a concession to the folly of his detractors and also because 'the visit by him would sanctify the tiraths' (Ras i-ch. 44).

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Institution of the Guru

The Guru attached great importance to institution of 'Guru'. The Guru utters :—

ਜਪ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਹੀਂ

ਜਬ ਲਗ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨਾ ਕਮਾਈ[1]

No amount of meditation and penances and moral restraints could help unless the Divine word (ਸ਼ਬਦ) is lived. Again he remarks :

> "Sat Guru sees everything, the whole universe. Only his glimpse will not do. Shabad the Divine word will have to be contemplated."

In fact, at places more than one, the Guru finds no difference between 'Guru' and 'word.'

The added emphasis at the role of 'Guru' and 'Word' was not without any purpose. It sanctified the institution of Guru obviously to develop the tendency among the people to look towards him for guidance. The true 'Guru' was Nanak which embodied the Eternal flame or Universal spirit. By presenting that light of the Guru Nanak blended with Angad, the Guru made it explicit that Guruship represented a continuity, a unity. Since Guru Nanak proclaimed that he was a poet or a bard, his words or the words of his successors acquired sanctity and status as great as that of Guru. Thus in the compositions of Guru Amar Das, we find that whereas the Sikhs were being hammered again and again the divine character of 'Guru' and his pivotal position in the process of spirit-social regeneration, Shabad was also being raised to the status as great as that of Guru. By imparting so much importance to the 'word' the Guru was doing the spade work for Guru Gobind Singh to declare Adi Granth as Guru.

A careful study of the different aspects of Guruship as said above, two conclusions emerge. Firstly the Guru was lying redoubled emphasis on the impersonal character of Guruship, side by side its personal one. Secondly, Shabd which came to be regarded as the word of Guru was exalted more explicitly than it was done by his predecessors thereby lending the status of the Guru to the 'word'. Judged in the context of the cultural and educational level as also the growth of Sikhism, the institution of 'Guru' played a remarkable part in the consolidation and the integration of the Sikh Church as well as Sikh community. The Guru, being one of the embodiment of the light became cynosure of the faith of the people and thus their rallying point. Since the sanctity which was attached with the role of Guru Nanak

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1. Guru Granth : p. 86.

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came to be associated also with his successors in all of whom there appeared to shine the light of Nanak, it bestowed upon the office of the Guru a legitimate authority for initiative. No wonder, they were entitled to take vital decisions by virtue of their office and these decisions became the extension of Guru Nanak's mission both logically and historically. The raising of the status of 'Shabd' as high as Guru also had its role to play. It protected the Sikhs from falling under the influence of the words (shabds) of others.

Furthermore, it helped the multiplicity of sangats in their functioning. The Guru could not attend the affairs of all the sangats. The difficulty must have been faced by Guru Nanak, even by Guru Angad. Guru Amar Das tried to overcome the difficulty by appointing different missionaries to serve as link between the Sangats and the Guru. But still the solution was far from satisfactory under the circumstances, the Guru's shabd helped a lot. Shabd could reach anywhere and since it represented the spirit of the Gurus it served as a remarkable cohesive force among congregations apart from its being valuable instructional means.

Construction of Baoli

During the times of Guru Amar Das, it began to be felt that the Sikhs should have their own seats of religion and pilgrimage so that it might not be necessary for them to go to tiraths (Holy places) of the Hindus.

The Guru constructed 'Baoli'[1] at Goindwal. The work was constructed under the personal supervision and instructions of Guru Amar Dass.[2] The work on it started in A.D. 1552 and finished in A.D. 1559.[3] He sanctified it and fixed the first day of Baisakh as the day for the annual gathering of the Sikhs.[4] The 'Baoli' was a monument of the devotion of the people to the Guru and an embodiment of the co-operative effort which the people put to bring this into existence. The Guru took keen interest in its execution The Baoli had eighty-four descending steps.[5] According to Macauliffe, the Guru had decreed that "whoever should attentively and reverently repeat the 'Japji' on every step should escape from the wanderings in the wombs of the eighty-four lakhs of luring creatures". It is said that before Guru Amar Das started the construction of Baoli, he fell into a trance and saw Guru Nanak appear and order him to make a place of pilgrimage where God alone should be worshipped.

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1. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 22.
2. A well with a pucca stance leading down to the water surface.
3. *Sikhism* : Punjabi University Publication.
4. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh : *A short History of the Sikhs*.
5. Refer to *Mehma Parkash* by Sarup Dass Bhalla.

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Manak Chand's Case

Thereupon the Guru purchased land and with due religious ceremoney, the work commenced. But after some work, the Guru found that large stones were hindering the progress. The Guru then called his Sikhs that he wanted one of them to drive a peg into its base; but this involved a great danger to life. Shri Manak Chand of Virowal volunteered. The peg was duly driven; but the Baoli was so much over-flowed with water that Manak could not stem the current which issued from the aperture formed by the peg and he was drowned. According to Sikh tradition lamentations of the Manak's mother and wife moved the Guru so much that he went to the Baoli and assured the two ladies that the youngman was not dead. He called him by name and the body rose to the surface. The Guru touched it with his feet and 'Manak Chand' walked forth from the water in the full possession of life and vigour.[1]

The story of the display of miraculous power was wrong

Obviously the story that the Guru made use of miraculous power, is a fabrication and contrary to the teachings of the Guru who disclaimed and denounced all miraculous power that was bound to lead to spiritual sterility and hypocrisy.

However, the Baoli marked a very important step in the history of Sikhism. It soon developed into a very important place of Sikh pilgrimage.

Importance

The step helped the cause of Sikhism in many ways. The Sikhs started visiting the place in a large number with a view to seeking salvation and this thing afforded opportunity to the Guru to come into contact with the Sikhs. The very fact that so many people gathered at one place generated among them the spirit of common brotherhood. Moreover, they began to feel the futility of going to Hardwar while a place of pilgrimage near their hearths and homes was available, and in this way, they were helped to save themselves from falling under the debasing superstitions of the common mass and that of crafty Brahmins. Moreover, the Baoli, being reservoir of water catered to the needs of the people, and on this account also, the Guru's esteem in the eyes of the people rose very high thereby imparting strength to the body social of the Sikhs.

Enlargement of Free Kitchen (Langar)

The institution of free kitchen started by Guru Nanak and developed by Guru Angad Dev was taken care of with assiduity. The standard of food was improved and the ideals of the institution were more clearly defined. In the 7th Pauri of the coronation ode, Satta, and Balwand in Ram Kali di Var sang "Ever in thy kitchen O, Amar Das, are clarified butter and refined flour and sugar to eat".[2] The Guru formally ordered that all his disciples should take their meals from the same

1. Macauliffe : *Sikh Religion*, Vol. II, pp. 95-8.
2. Suraj Parkash, Ras-i, ch. 30.

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kitchen and no distinction was made between a Hindu and a Muslim or between the high caste and the low caste. The Guru had declared unequivocally that all visitors were to sit in one line and eat from the kitchen before they were allowed to behold him. All had to sit in rows and eat together. The Guru's langar remained open till three hours after night fall. Whatever remained after the guests were fed was thrown to the beasts and the birds. Nothing was wasted. The Sikhs occounts go so far as to make Dr Ganda Singh say that 'even Akbar and the Raja of Haripur had to take their meals from the kitchen before they were allowed to see the Guru. The cut and dried declaration as stated above and its steadfast pursuit struck a blow to the caste and creed prejudices. The Guru emphatically puts :—

No consideration of caste, creed, clime or coat

Be not proud of thy caste
For, he alone is Brahmin who knows the Brahma, the only God

O unwise one, be not proud of thy caste
For, a myriad errors flow out of this pride.[1]

Untonchables did not pollute food

Nor did Guru repose any faith in the pollution of food if it is touched by a low caste or a meat-eater. The Guru says to Mai Das, a reputed Pandit from Kanshi (Benaras) that even if he were a great Pandit, he would take care to remember that nothing is polluted in the mess. "All outlined dining squares are false. Only God is pure (Maru ki Var). Such thoughts occur because the mind is impure and separateness from the Almighty exists" (Majh Mah 3). In this way, the people were made to renounce their social prejudices and to look upon one another as brothers. The institution helped in removing untouchability and caste prejudices. It proved a powerful aid in the propaganda work. Besides serving as an asylum for the poor, it also became a great instrument for advertisement and popularity and it gave a definite direction to the charities of the Guru's followers.[2]

Injunctions against Udasis

Sikhism in its earlier stages was not only liable to relapse into orthodoxy against which Guru Angad Dev had tried his best to guard it, but there was greater danger of its degenerating into a narrow sect of ascetical enthusiasts or fanatics. There is no doubt that Guru Nanak was himself a married man and had not spoken of married life in contemptuous or condemnatory terms; but even then his followers were prone to believe that the world was nothing, that it was all 'maya', a delusion and a mirage. According to Malcolm,[3] Guru Amar Das told his Sikhs through

1. Rag Bhairo M. 3 : Chaupadis, p. 1128 of Guru Granth.
2. I. B. Bannerjee : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. (1963), pp. 158-9,
3. Mohsin Fani and Malcolm also express the same view.

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Hukamnamas (fiats) that any one who believed in renunciation and ascetic way of life (udasi) was not a Sikh. He enjoined upon them to reject the path of renunciation and to consider the life of a householder as the only way approved for practising religion. The Guru repeatedly said "This body is beautiful bride with whom her husband constantly lives. He is the giver of life, sustainer of all and He lives in this body. Some fools go to the jungles, rivers or mountains in search of God not knowing that He and all His incarnation are within this body."

He also laid emphasis on the necessity of believing in 'One Guru, One Word, and only one Interpretation (Var Sorath).' "There is no Guru," he said, "except the consecrated Guru; and it is disreputable not to acknowledge him." These opportune steps saved the Sikh church from disintegration and prevented the Sikhs from going the way of the followers of Kabirs and others medieval saints It was decided once for all that the Udasis had nothing to do with Sikhism. In view of all this Macauliffe is right when he says that Guru Amar Das was responsible for separating the Sikhs from the Udasis. Malcolm[1] and Mohsin Fani[2] also are of Macauliffe's view but there are some modern scholars who state that the aforesaid work was accomplished by Guru Angad Dev. We however, support the former view because the latter view is unwarranted.

Collection of the Hymns

To make the teachings more effective and to emphasize still more the superior-most position of the word (Bani) in the process of regeneration, Guru Amar Das had more copies made of the hymns of Guru Nanak and Angad which he got from Guru Angad,[3] and added to them his own compositions and those of the Hindu Bhaktas whose teachings were in conformity with those of Nanak.

These copies were later on used by Guru Arjan for the compilation of the Holy Granth. Guru Amar Das declared the Guru's Word to be superior to all the scriptures of the

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1. Malcolm : *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 27.
2. Mohsin Fani and Malcolm also express the same view.
3. Guru Angad had his predecessor's sayings with him is proved by the fact that many of his own contentions have a direct bearing upon Guru Nanak's and echo the very expressions of the latter (*See* the slokas of Guru Angad attached to Guru Nanak 22nd Pauri in Asa di Var; also compare the two slokas of the 17th Pauri of Var Majh.) That Guru Amar Das had Guru Nanak's compositions with him when he wrote his own hymns is proved by several facts *e.g.* (a) Guru Amar Das used almost the same musical measures (17 out of 19) as are used by Guru Nanak, (b) his elegiac verses called Allah mian correspond to the elegiac piece of the same name and in the same measure.

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world, and the Sikhs were advised to use only the Guru's word in worship (Anand xxiv). He rejected the six systems of Hindu's philosophy in favour of the Guru's Gospel. He said "This system of God is obtained by the fortunate only and that also through the Guru's word by means of true detachment. The six systems of the Hindus are in vogue now a days, but the Guru's system is profound and unequalled. It provides the way of salvation and makes the true one reside in the heart. "The system, if adopted with love, can save the whole world" (Asa xi).

Importance

This step of the Guru resulted in the integration of the Sikh doctrine which helped the Sikhs to appreciate the difference between the teachings of their Gurus and Hinduism as it was existing during those times. It also made the Sikhs more and more self-contained in social matters. Since this anthology was in Panjabi, it gained enormous popularity among the masses, who did not understand either the Sanskrit texts of the Hindus or the Arabic texts of the Muslims. It reduced the importance of the Brahmin priests, who had maintained a strict monopoly over the knowledge of the sacred texts, and that of Mullahs who alone could interpret the Koran. Once Guru Amar Das was asked why he had given up Sanskrit which was the language of gods. He replied, "It rains on earth even though the earth has water in the well meaning thereby that Sanskrit was like water in a well and has a limited utility whereas Punjabi was like rain which fell over all the land.[1]

Manji and Piri Systems

During Guru Amar Das's pontificate, the number of the followers of the Guru's increased considerably, and it was felt necessary for the Guru to take requisite steps to organise the scattered Sangats or congregations into a system. With a view to achieving this object, Guru evolved a system known as Manji system. He divided his whole spiritual domain into twenty two provinces called manjies (bishoprics),[2] so named because the incharge of a manji sat on a cot to deliver the message of the Guru. The incharge of a Manji was a devoted Sikh and acted as vicegerant of the Guru. His business was to preach the mission of the Guru to make arrangements to keep the sangat in touch with the Guru, and to encourage the people to organise the sangats. Besides this, he was responsible for

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1. Khushwant Singh : A History of the Sikhs, Vol. I, p. 53.
2. Macauliffe : Sikh Religion, vol. II, p. 151; manji literally means couches on which the Gurus used to sit and communicate instruction to their audiences. The word in the singular is manja. See also glossary of the Punjab Tribes and Castes Vol. II, p. 681.

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the remittance of the offerings of the Sikhs which they made in token of their veneration for the Guru.

Piri System—Ladies' Organization

The Guru established another organisation called Piri (ਪੀੜੀ) system.[1] The incharges of piries were ladies whose objective was to lit the flame of Guru's word among women. Bibi Bhani, Bibi Dani and Bibi Pal were some of the most revered incharges of different piries.

Some scholars state that the Guru divided his spiritual domain into twenty-two manjies or divisions which were no other than the twenty-two provinces of Akbar. But this is absolutely incorrect; firstly because when the manji system was evolved, Akbar had just occupied the throne and secondly, the number of the provinces organised by the Akbar even upto his end was far less than the number of the Guru's bishoprics. However the Guru trained and sent out 94 men and 52 women as preachers of the 22 Manjies[2], Kaniya Lal gives the names of five Manjies (1) village Wayan, tehsil Kharar, district Ropar, (2) village Dharmsala, tehsil Ambala, (3) Viarowal in district Amritsar, (4) Lahore, (5) a village gardnoh, in district Patiala.[3]

Importance

The system, however, made tangible contribution to the development and progress of Sikhism. According to G.C. Narang, "It is evident that this measure of the third Guru have gone a long way in strengthening the foundations of the Church and in carrying on the propaganda in all parts of the country."[4]

Indu Bhushan Bannerjee says "A great step was in this manner taken towards giving the Sikhs an organisation of their own but the Guru was not less careful about his duties at the centre. His own person no doubt provided a strong binding force."[5]

Some scholars have attributed political motives to the organisation and have asserted that the Guru aimed at establishing parallel Government. We, however, do not find any substance in the aforesaid assertion because the protagonists

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1. Lal Singh : Twarikh Guru Khalsa.
2. Kahan Singh in 'Mahan Kosh' gives the following names of the incharges of the twenty-two dioceses : 1. Allah Yar, 2 Sachan Sach, 3. Sadharan, 4. Savan Mal, 5. Sukhan, 6. Handal, 7. Kedari, 8. Kheda, 9. Gangu Shah, 10. Darbari, 11. Paro, 12. Fera, 13. Bua, 14. Beni, 15. Mahesa, 16. Mai Dass, 17. Manak Chand, 18. Murari, 19. Raja Ram, 20. Rang Shah, 21. Rang Dass, 22. Lalo.
3. Tarikh-i-Panjab, Urdu, p. 19.
4. G. C. Narang : Transformation of Sikhism, p. 33.
5. I. B. Banerjee : Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. I, p. 168.

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of this view do not base their conclusion on any solid evidence. All the same, any organisation that brings the people together and attempts at uplifting them morally and socially can breed a political movement.

Social ethics of Guru Amar Das

Apart from taking the aforesaid steps which went a long way to bring about new social consciouness, the Guru took steps to evolve structure as might suit to his scheme of social regeneration. Guru Nanak did not exclude social affairs pertaining to society out of his scheme for the spiritual regeneration and hence advised the people to keep up certain ethical standards. Guru Amar Das, therefore, addressed himself to the task with vigour and enthusiasm. From the various steps he took, it becomes clear that he made conscious efforts to emancipate the minds of the people from the fetters forged by outmoded customs and social practices as also to create new customs, symbols and practices to build a separate social structure —very much in need at this stage of evolution of the Khalsa for new ideals could only be preserved if there was special structure reflecting them.

Guru Amar Das, true to his objective, launched a frontal attack on the caste system or the Verna Asram that formed the spinal chord of the Hindu society. Once Pirthi Mal and Tulsa who belonged to the stock of Bhalla Khatri said, "Revered Sir, you are Khatri as we are. We have come to you with this confidence that you being one of our caste brotherhood would help us." The Guru replied 'He has no caste and he is no more than a human being.' The Guru regarded the pride born out of caste as narrow-mindedness while to attain eternal bliss, there was need to transcend self and to merge in self.

Condemnation of Untouchability

Untouchability, the offshoot of the caste system also did not escape condemnation on his part. Guru Nanak's heart went out to the lowly and the despised. He vowed to emancipate them. He took with him a Musalman Mirasi a man of low origin, called him *Bhai* (Brother) and laid the foundation of his fellowship. To all and sundry, he carried the joyful tidings "Despise no man, God dwells in every heart." "All are equally the sons of the Father above. Birth in this or that family cannot exalt or degrade a man. It is actions that do so. A good pious man of humble birth is far more dear to God and men of God than a high born rascal. Doors of the Father's mansion are open to all. Live well in the world, love and serve your fellow creatures, your creator and it will win a seat of honour

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in the darbar (court) of the Almighty Father...All prejudices of birth and family will have to be laid off."[1] Thus it was Guru Nanak who founded the Holy Fellowship where the lowest is equal to the highest in race as in creed.

Guru Amar Das, likewise promoted the cause of the 'Holy Fellowship'. He, in addition to his preachings against customs adopted another technique which sounded novel. He proclaimed that no one, howsoever high he might be, could see him without sitting and taking the meals in Langar. The instructions were followed in letter and spirit so much so that even Akbar had to partake of the food in Guru's kitchen, while sitting in Pangat (line). The Guru advised the people not to indulge in the evil customs of untouchability because "one would take care to remember that nothing is polluted in the mess. All outlying dining squares are false, only God is pure."[2] In this way the people were made to renounce their social prejudices and to look upon one another as brothers.

Inter-caste Marriages

Yet another step he took to bring about social harmony among the people segmented into castes and sub-castes was the encouragement which he gave to inter-caste marriages. Before him inter-caste marriages were not favoured, with the result that caste pride prejudices had taken root. The Guru enjoined upon his followers that there was nothing wrong in contracting inter-caste marriages. He banded his views by marrying his own dauther to one, Jetha (Guru Ram Das) without asking him his caste or sub-caste. The Guru gave special attention to the improvement of the status of women in society. He prohibited the practice of Sati i e. to say burning of widow on the funeral pyre of their husbands. In popular opinion the woman who does so was Sati (Truthful). In fact the practice implied that women had no independent and separate entity and her salvation lay only in committing herself to fire along with her deceased husband. The Guru exploded the myth and said that woman was sati or true who experienced pangs of separation instead of burning herself on the pyre.

Furthermore, the Guru prohibited the practice of 'Sati' i.e. to say burning of widows on the funeral pyer of their husbands. G.B. Scott acclaims the Guru as 'first reformer who condemned the prevailing Hindu practice of Sati'.[3]

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1. Everyone says there are four castes, but it is from God that everyone comes. The same is the clay which fashions the whole world : the same clay the potter moulds into vessels of all kinds. The five elements make up the body's form and who can say who has less of of these or more ? (Adi Granth p. 1128)
2. *Maru-ki-Var*.
3. Payne : Short History of the Sikhs, p. 31.

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The Guru declares that "the Satti is one who lives contented and embellishes herself with good conduct, and cherishes the Lord ever and calls on Him."[1] As the advice of 'cherishing the Lord and calling on him, is the advice to everyone throughout the Adi Granth, the above declaration requires widows to conduct themselves as all others do. In order to be virtuous (Satti), women ought to maintain families knit of love. As a matter of fact, the virtues of the housewife are to be in terms of her role in the family and in terms of self immolation. The Guru says "The women burn themselves on the pyres of their husbands. But if they love their spouses well, they suffer the pangs of separation even otherwise."

Cunningham[2] remarks this was rather a very mild discountenance 'leading the way to amendment by persuasion rather than by possitive enactment', but this is too strong a criticism. As a matter of fact the Guru was the first reformer in the medieval India who condemned the religiously sanctified practice of Sati.

Prohibition of Drinking

The Guru did not like the fast-developing habit of wine drinking. As a matter of fact he, like Guru Nanak, motivated a person to work for God and his people on earth. Says the Guru:—

"One man bringeth the full goblet
another cometh and filleth the cup
The intellect of him who drinketh departeth
and intoxication entereth his brain
He distinguishes not between mine and thine
and is buffeted by his master
If possible, drink not at all the false wine
by which man forgetteth God and receiveth
punishment at his court."[3]

Widow Re-marriage

He initiated the move to bring about self reliant, fearless and upright ladihood in the country. The contemporary society denied them equality to man and regarded them as hewers of word and drawers to water. Guru Nanak in his discussion with jogies remarks "It is sin to regard ladies as 'undesirable' who give birth to the most desirable." Guru

1. Adi Granth, p. 787, VAR of Rajsuhi Slok, M 3.
2. Cunningham, p. 50.
3. Macauliffe : Sikh Religion, p. 215.

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Amar Das, true to the spirit of Nanak's teachings, preached in favour of widow-marriage; and obviously he was right in doing so if he was to make an attempt to place woman on equal footing with men. It helped them develop themselves in personality and confidence.

Denunciation of Pardah

The custom of 'Purdah' among the ladies was also disapproved. The reasons were obvious. In the first place, it implied the inferiority of woman as compared with man, and secondly it presumed that the ladies were meant for house only and could not partake of the activities of the world. The Guru, fully aware of the consequence which this custom had led to, regarded it an evil to be got rid of as early as possible. Macauliffe states that when the ruler of Haripur and his queens came to have his sacred glimpse, they were allowed to see him only if they would discard 'purdah'. Tradition says that all queens except one discarded 'purdah'. The Guru cursed the Rani in purdah and so she became mad. The tradition obviously displays the theme that the Guru did not approve of purdah.

New Birth and Death Ceremonies

Many useless and expensive customs which were stalking the Hindu society, no less than Muslim society were also considered undesirable and useless. The Guru wanted to emancipate his followers from the fetters which these customs prevailing among the people had forged.

Accordingly he enjoined upon his followers to dispense with the elaborate ceremonies connected with the birth and death of a person. Thirty years after the death of Guru Amar Das, Guru Arjan Dev requested Sunder, the grandson of Guru Amar Das to write an account of the instruction which Guru Amar Das left regarding the ceremonies to be performed at the time of his death. Sunder compiled with the ordainment of the Guru and composed a long poem, popularly known as 'Sadd' says Sunder:—

"Finally, the true Guru spoke
After my death sing God's praises
Call God instead of a Pandit and, for
the Puran, read God's word;
Read God's word hear God's name; The
Guru desireth God's love instead of a
lofty bier.
Barley rolls, bread in leaves, Hindu
obsequies, lamps, and throwing his bones
into the Ganges.

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The true Guru spoke as it pleased God,
and he was blended with Omniscient Being."[1]

In this way, the Guru effected a departure from the Hindu social practices. The point may no doubt be raised that Sunder was not an eyewitness of what happened at the time of his great-grand father's death and that the statement might easily have been coloured by subsequent developments but the fact that Sunder wrote not more than thirty years after the death of Amar Das when several of the latter's contemporaries were still alive and that his statement obtained a ready acceptance considerably weakens the above objections. In fact there seems to be little doubt that in the 'Sadd' we get a genuine hint about the views of Guru Amar Das regarding the Hindus' obsequies.

Moreover, the Guru considered neither the customs of Hindu marrige nor those of the Muslims conducive to the growth of the society of his vision. He made the marriage ceremony simple and inexpensive. He enjoined upon the Sikhs to recite 'lawan'[2] (the Sikh Epithalamium) on the occasion of marriage and to reject unnecessary ceremonies connected with it. The recitation of Sikh Epithalamium hardly takes four minutes and needs no priest to recite it. This being so, the Sikh epithalamium robbed the Brahmins of the occasions when they could get the chance to assert supremacy over the people. This hymn, says Dr. I.B. Bannerjee, may or may not have been written on the occasion of the marriage of Guru Ram Das "but that hardly effects its significance. It clearly appears that the Guru was commenting on a custom already in existence and we may as well accept the Sikh tradition that the change had been introduced by his predecessor."

Commenting upon the death and marriage ceremonies Dr. Bannerjee writes : "The change he described to introduce in the very important ceremonies connected with marriage and death struck at the very root of the influence of the priestly class and though in such a matter, where long standing and cherished practices were concerned, success must necessarily have been slow, the ball had been set rolling and Sikhism put on the way of gradual consolidation into a separate sect."[3]

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1. Macauliffe : ii, pp. 151-53.
2. Lawan is that part of the marriage ceremony which consists in tying together the upper garments of the bride and bridegroom and causing them to go four times round the Guru Granth Sahib while this hymn, is repeated by the Sikh priest.
3. I. B. Bannerjee : Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. I, p. 181.

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The ethos of Guru Amar Das's preaching was the uplift of the down-trodden, the meek and the neglected. He denounced the hypocrites, and the superstitious. Nor did he spare the capitalists who bereft of any streak of idealism, regarded wealth as the be all and end all of life. The Guru utters :

ਮਾਇਆ ਧਾਰੀ ਅਤਿ ਅੰਨਾ ਬੋਲਾ
ਸਬਦ ਨ ਸੁਨਈ ਬਹੁ ਰਲੇ ਘਚੋਲਾ

The wealthy are blind, cares not to listen to
the word and makes different faces.
He is a great hoax and his mind is wicked.[1]

Visit of Akbar to Goindwal

Another important event of the Guru's pontificate was the respect shown by Akbar for the Guru and his teachings. Guru Amar Das could lay claim to many of the hill Chieftains[2] among his followers who contributed thousands to the funds of the Church but the greatest triumph of the church in the eyes of the people was scored when the Guru's fame brought Akbar to his doors. According to Gyan Singh "Akbar sent a trusted official, one Bhagwan Das Khatri of Sirhind, to beseech the Guru to pray for his success." The Guru was then engaged in the constructions of Baoli and is stated to have said that the Chittour would fall as soon as the wheel of the well would settle in position. The siege ended in Akbar's victory and he visited Goindwal. He took his meal at the Temple of Bread (Langar) and met the Guru. The working and the laudable objectives of the institution of the free kitchen impressed him[3] so much that he made an offer of eighty four villages. But the Guru declined the offer and uttered "I wish not that the langar should be run by one man. The institution owes its existense to the people, let them run it." Even then "Akbar got effected the deed of 84 villages in the name of Bibi Bhani where the city of Amritsar was raised."

How far the reason embodied in the tradition is correct it is very difficult to judge because of scanty historical material but Akbar's friendly visit was undoubted.[4] The friendship of Akbar with the Guru operated in two ways for

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1. Guru Granth : p. 313, Gauri Var 3.
2. The Raja of Haripur is said to have accepted the Guru's teachings (Macauliffe, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 262; Panth Prakash, pp. 73-4 ; Suraj Parkash, Ras I, xxxii). Subsequent events, show that this is extremely different.
3. *The Sikh Religion, Vol. II* by Macauliffe, p. 51.
4. G. C. Narang : *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 37.

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the benefit of church. In the first place, it increased the prestige of the Guru and made their mission more popular with the higher classes of the society. Yatha Raja Tatha Parja (As is the king, so are the subjects) The truth of this proverb is nowhere better illustrated than in India, the land of its birth. The early recruits to all new churches are the cast-aways of established organisations. The early Sikhs too were mostly those who could hardly claim high places in the Hindu society. The attention of the sovereign, however, tolerant and broadminded by nature he may be, are bound to tell in favour of the object of his attention and as Panth Prakash says that the very fact of Akbar's doing homage to the Guru brought crowds of followers to the fold of Sikhism.

The other way in which Akbar's friendship was utilized was that the Guru took advantage of it to relieve oppression or popular sufferings. Two examples of this are recorded in Panth Parkash and other books. In the first instance, Guru Amar Das and his followers were exempted from paying pilgrimage tax while they visited Hardwar. Secondly, when the Guru put the case of the peasantry before the Emperor and asked him to remit the whole land tax for the year, in view of the likely loss to the peasants because of expected sudden fall in the prices of the grains owing to the rich harvest and Emperor's marching off the Punjab, Akbar readily consented.

This timely intercession for the sake of peasants immensely increased the popularity of the Guru and made him an idol with the peasantry of Majha and Malwa who, in course of time, provided almost all the fighting strength of Guru Gobind Singh.

Appraisal of the Guru's Achievements

Guru Amar Das was nominated as the Guru at the age of seventy, but the works, he did during his ministry clearly indicate that age had no adverse effect on him. He was active both in mind and body. Jogis, Vaishnavites and others came to him to dislodge him from his stand through argumentation, but all were made to submit to him. In enunciating and propounding Sikh doctrine, he was unique; in evolving institutions to ensure the continuous growth of Sikhism, he showed wisdom; in introducing innovations in social and ethical sphere, he exhibited exceptional originality and a keen awareness of the process of regeneration and rejuvenation. He had the rare quality of taking quick and firm decisions. The way he handled the challenge of the Udasis speaks volumes in his favour. No wonder Satta and Balwand in their Var say "in the age of utter darkness he rose like the sun. He sowed the seed of truth and reaped its fruit."[1]

1. Var : *Satta and Balwand.*

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During this period of the Guru's pontificate the fame of the infant church spread far and wide, rudiments of a separate organisation were given to the Sikhs and new forms and practices were introduced to supersede the old and bind the neophytes more closely together. The period was significant for something else also.

The introduction of many innovations such as building of a temple at Goindwal etc. tended to break the close affiliations of the Sikhs with the Hindus who led by Brahmins began to harass the Sikhs. When their own resources failed, they concocted complaints and lodged them with Akbar. When even he did not do anything in the matter, they bribed the local officials to harass the Sikhs. This was the first serious break with the Hindu social polity and the beginning of the oppression of the Sikhs.

Undoubtedly Amar Das's Guruship was a 'land mark' in the process of crystallisation of Sikhism. Dr. I.B. Bannerjee regards the pontificate of Guru Amar Das as a 'turning point'. He says so because he believes that the original object of Sikhism was to reform and restate Hinduism. But since we feel that Sikhism was distinct movement even in the beginning we do not subscribe to the view held by the learned scholar. He, however, is clear that the Amar Das's ministry was a definite phase in the building of the Sikhs church and Church nation.

Succession of Guru Ram Das

Amar Das lived to the age of ninety-five. He did not consider any of his sons fit to succeed him and chose instead his son-in-Law Ram Das whose conduct was marked by utmost devotion, piety and complete understanding of the various aspects of the Sikh religion. It is said that once when Guru Amar Das, seated on a foot stool was taking a bath, one of the legs of the stool broke; but before Guru Amar Das should fall down, Bibi Bhani placed her hand under it and did not allow the Guru to feel the loss of the leg of the stool. After some time, when the Guru came to know that the hand of Bibi Bhani was bleeding profusely, he was moved, and overcome by the sense of gratitude asked Bibi Bhani if there was anything in the world that he could do for her. She then begged her father that the Guruship should be made hereditary in her own family. He granted the boon and the office of Guruship became hereditary.

The story has sparked off three important questions. Firstly was it due to emotional outburst which influenced the Guru to take decision ? Secondly was it to lend stability to the institution that the Guruship was made hereditary ? Thirdly was the principle of hereditary succession a guarantee for ensuing

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the requisite Guruship. It was certainly not an emotional step, it was done because Guru Ram Das and Bibi Bhani had won over the Guru by their abject surrender to his ordainment, their spirit of service and their keen undestanding of the Sikh principles. The decision pertaining to the succession to Guruship seems to have been taken with a view to reducing the chances of disputes over the issue of succession and eliminating the possibility of laying the claim to the Guruship on the part of the persons outside Guru's family.

The decision is full of wisdom because in the case of dispute among the family members it could not have been more than a simple affair, but in case the outsiders lay claim to Guruship, and there is a dispute there was likelihood of it assuming the form of a schismatic move.

So far as the third question was concerned, it is not difficult to understand that there is no incomptibility involved. Guru upto now had been given impersonal character and could be transferred to any one whom the Guru deemed fit. This being so, Guruship could be transferred to any body, fit for the job. It was irrelevant whether that particular person belonged to the same family or to any other family.

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Chapter 8

GURU RAM DAS
(b. 1534; d. 1581)

Guru Ram Das born on September 24, 1534 in Chuna Mandi, Lahore. His father Hari Das, who belonged to Sodhi caste was a petty trader. His mother, Anup Kaur who was named Daya Kaur after her marrige was a lady given to the life of devotion and prayer. Hari Das also had a religious bent of mind. The parents being very poor, Ram Das even as a child, had to supplement the income of his father by selling boiled grams. The Sikh chroniclers state that once his poor mother sent him with a basketful of boiled grams to sell; but he gave them to a company of holy men. The story shows that Ram Das had a large heart, sharp sensitivity to the sufferings of the people. When still a small boy, his dear mother passed away. When he grew to be seven, his father expired. Orphan as he was, grandmother (mother's mother) took him to her village Basarke. There also he had to pass his days in poverty and shortages. His straightend circumstances did not demoralise his rather quickened his intellect, bred in him courage and made him serene and sober. The handsomeness of his physique coupled with the sterling qualities of mind made (Guru) Ram Das a rare personality at once lovable and charismatic. This was the reason that people at Basarke loved and adored him. According to Bhai Sahib Singh "Guru Amar Das who came to Basarke to condole with the grandmother of Ram Das at the death of her son-in-law, developed deep affection for the boy and even after he left for Khadur Sahib (A.D. 1541) he used to come to Basarke and pat the boy."

Ram Das lived at Basarke for five years. He lived on what he earned by selling the boiled grams. At the age of twelve, he along with his grandmother left for Goindwal to settle there.

According to Bhai Sahib Singh, (Guru) Amar Das who was deputed by Guru Angad Dev to found a new city of Goindwal on the bank of the river Beas invited Ram Das along with other relatives to settle in the city. In fact Guru Amar Das had started taking interest in the welfare of Ram Das since he first met him at Basarke. At Goindwal, Ram Das began to live a life dedicated to the Guru's cause. He would do any job for the Guru and the cause which he championed. He had the sacred privilege of seeing personally Guru Angad also. He

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addressed himself zealously to understand the meaning of the sacred compositions of the Gurus in all their import as also their cause. He acquired mastery over the diction, poetic art and mythology. He learnt science of music which he made use of in his compositions of different hymns. Through service and contemplation, he mastered his senses and different propensities.

In A.D. 1552, Guru Angad Dev passed on his apostolate to Amar Das instead of his sons who did not come upto his expectations because they were not as devoted to his cause as Amar Das. Ram Das, who at that time was living at Goindwal could very easily understand that in order to qualify for apostolate one had to acquire requisite merit and fitness.

Accordingly (Guru) Ram Das exerted to the best of his capacity and ability to acquire the same. Guru Amar Das struck by the manifold qualities of Ram Das decided to marry his dear daughter, Bibi Bhani, with him and the marrige was solemnized in A.D. 1553.[1]

After his marrige Jetha stayed with his father-in-law and was closely associated with his ministry. He put on record many an incident connected with the struggles that his Master with his opponents, and as such his writings are a good source of information in respect of contemporary affairs.

Jetha commanded full confidence of the Guru and this was the reason that he deputised the Guru on his behalf in the court of Akbar and accompanied the Guru when the latter went on a long journey to Hardwar to acquaint the people with his mission. The Guru was so much impressed by Ram Das that in A.D. 1574 he got down from his seat, seated Jetha thereon and placed five paise and one coconut before him as a mark of handing over Guru Gaddi to him.

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1. Giani Gian Singh says that the marriage took place in A.D. 1542, i.e. to say when Bibi Bhani was in the sixth year of her age. A pr obe into the matter would dispel the fog hiding the truth. The view of Gian Singh is unfounded for two reasons; firstly, the Guru did not favour child marriage and secondly the sequence of the fact belies the assertion. It is said that the Guru, on seeing the boy, exclaimed "Jetha is the right type of the boy, I was in search for my daughter." Obviously, the Guru meant that the Guru was of a reasonable age and endowed with certain qualities required of good husband and certainly Jetha was not a child. Moreover, Jetha accompanied a band of devoted Sikhs who went to Goindwal to render service in the construction of Baoli. Since all records speak that the construction of Baoli was started in A.D. 1552, the marriage took place after or in A.D. 1552. Hence it is reasonable to assign the end of A.D. 1552 or the beginning of A.D. 1553 as the time for the marriage of Bibi Bhani.

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Mohri, the youngest son of Amar Das reconciled himself with the succession of Guru Ram Das, but Mohan, the eldest one, resented this act of his father, retired in indignant silence to the solitude of his own room, where he remained all his life. Rama, the elder son-in-law also acquiesced in the choice made by the Guru.

Consolidation and Transformation

On the assumption of the pontificate, Guru Ram Das shifted his residence to the present site of Amritsar to avoid any possible unpleasantness with the relatives of the last Guru so that he might find peaceful time to work on his plans. He was a powerful personality. Whosoever came into his presence, was impressed. His songs moved all. In the hymns composed by him, God was adored and love-sickness of the soul was voiced. This melted even the stony hearts. His words, mighty, simple and touching went deep into the hearts of listeners. He infected visitors with the Love of God deep rooted in his heart. He composed a large number of soul-elevating hymns. The poetry of Ram Das flows like a stream of love whose cooling melody yearns for the beloved and sings the magic-spell of his glance. It is put in the mouth of the Bride of God, she pines in her longing for more glimpses of Him and still one more. The Master's divine music thrilled the soul of a whole people and his song had the might of bringing about a revolution in one's outlook.

Apart from composing hymns and preaching Guru's Gospel, he took steps to strengthen the organisation of the Sikhs. The following is the account of the steps he took in this direction.

Foundation of Chak Guru or Ram Das Pur (Amritsar)

The most notable achievement of the Guruship of Guru Ram Das was the laying of the foundation of the city Ram Das Pur, which is now called as Amritsar. But there is no concensus of opinion as to when its foundation was actually laid. According to Macauliffe, when Akbar paid a visit to Guru Amar Das for the first time, he made a grant of land to Bibi Bhani, the daughter of Guru Amar Das. Shortly afterwards, the Guru asked Ram Das to shift to those lands and excavate there two tanks—Santokhsar and Amritsar. In this way, Guru Ram Das started the work during the life time of Guru Amar Das.

Ibbetson, Conningham, Archer and M'Greger, however, hold the opinion that the grant of the land on which the city of Amritsar developed was made by Akbar to Guru Ram Das, and it was the latter who founded the the city. "Sikhan De Raj

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Di Vithia" also supports this view. M'Gregar states that Akbar was much impressed by the hallowed personality of the Guru and issued an order that "a certain portion of ground should be granted to Ram Das which was accordingly done, and the ground thus bestowed, being of a circular farm was named 'Chakkar Ram Das'. According to the Amritsar District Gazetteer, the pool which formed the nucleus of the city, had been a favourite resort of Guru Ram Das. In 1577, he obtained grant of the site together with 500 bighas of land from the Emperor Akbar on payment of Rs. 700 Akbari to the Zamindars of Tung who owned the land. It may here be explained that none of these writers is a contemporary of Guru Amar Das and Ram Das; yet the account given by the District Gazetteers and European travellers seems to be true on two counts; firstly their account is in consonance with the Sikh tradition and secondly the basis of Macaulliffe's view i.e. Suraj Parkash is unreliable because it gives confused, at places self-contradictory account of this event.

From the above, it is evident that the present city of Amritsar was built on the land which was granted by Akbar to Guru Ram Das and he started the excavation work near about A.D. 1577. After some time Guru felt that it was difficult to direct the work of excavation from Goindwal and as a sequel to it, he left for the new place. Prof. Puran Singh gives another reason in this context. According to him, the Guru shifted to the new site because he did not want to come into clash with the Muslims and the orthodox Hindus of Goindwal who were feeling soar over the ever-increasing influence of the Guru.

According to G.C. Narang "small huts were built near the bank for the Guru and the Sikhs. A few more huts were raised to accommodate the visitors. As a result of all this, a small town in the neighbourhood of the tank grew up and it began to be called 'Chak Guru' or Ram Das Pura. He invited men of 52 trades to take up their residence there and to open their business in the Guru's Market which is still known as 'Guru ka Bazar'. The city, in the course of time grew to be the biggest centre of trade in the Punjab."

As regards the excavation of tanks, he had, in the beginning, undertaken to dig two tanks—Santokhsar and Amritsar. But after some time he felt that it was extremely difficult to complete both these projects simultaneously on account of the paucity of funds. Hence, the Guru suspended the work on Santokhsar and asked his followers to concentrate their attention on the tank, known as Amritsar (tank of Nectar). Bhai Budha and Bhai Selho who were the most devoted Sikhs were assigned the job of supervising the projects. According to Macauliffe "it was felt by the Guru and Bhai Budha that they must

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procure ample funds if they wanted to complete the whole work within a short span of time. Conseqnently, the Guru chalked out a plan to disseminate Guru's teachings on a larger scale which was also the remedy for the financial difficulties, for it would arouse devotion in the hearts of disciples who would naturally make more offerings.

Even with all this, the work of excavating and constructing the tanks could not be completed because of the early death of the Guru and the work was finished by his son—Guru Arjan Dev.

The laying of the foundation of the city of Amritsar is a step of far-reaching importance. "In founding the town of Amritsar at the most convenient and fertile centre, he laid deep the foundation of the future greatness of the Sikhs as a nation." The reasons are not far to seek.

Firstly the city, being situated in the heart of the tract and occupied by the sturdy peasants, enabled the Gurus to secure followers from their ranks, who ultimately proved the bulwark of their warlike successors. Secondly the people were able to gather at a common place of worship so well-situated. The Sikhs who followed the simple and pure tenets prescribed by the founder of their faith, now learnt to unite together and to foster those feelings of brotherly love which eventually strengthened the national tie and paved the way to the formation of a commonwealth on true patriotic principles. Thirdly, with construction of the city, the people abandoned visiting Hindu places of pilgrimage. Fourthly, the city, because it was surrounded by fertile lands, grew into a very important centre of trade in the Punjab. The merchants developed connections with far-off countries such as Bokhara, Kabul and Kashmir and contributed a lot towards widening the outlook of the Sikhs. Fifthly, the commercial prosperity of Amritsar ensured a rich revenue to the Sikh Gurus in the form of offerings. Sixthly, the city was free from all traces of communalism and symbolised in itself the secular way of life—which was the need of the times. Seventhly, the city, being a new colony of the disciples radiated dawn-light and no-wonder the people embraced Sikhism in a large number.

Masand System

Another step which contributed a lot towards organization was the setting up of Masand System. Two reasons prompted the Guru to bring this organization into existence. There was genuine need for building a rapport between the Guru and ever-swelling number of the Sikhs; and secondly the regular collection of the offerings was to be ensured.

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Under this system the Guru sent his trusted Sikhs to spread Sikh faith and collect offerings to be remitted to the Guru. The Sikhs, commissioned to do the aforesaid job were allotted a definite area, and were known as Masands. Masand seems to be a corruption of 'Mas Nad' shorter form of Masnedi-Ali or his Excellency, the title which the Moghul Governors often held. The exact number of Masands and their respective areas are not known to history, but this much is certain that very many Sikhs famous for integrity and piety were asked to act as masands. Some scholars, such as Mohsan Fani the author of "Dabistan-i-Mazahib" and some other modern historians are of the view that Masands system was introduced by Guru Arjan Dev and not by Guru Ram Das. Macauliffe, however, states that the system was originated under Guru Ram Das.

We have examined the contemporary records and reached the conclusion that the system grew up during the pontificate of Guru Ram Das, although it was elaborated in its details during the time of Guru Arjan Dev. In the support of our view, there is a concrete evidence in Panth Parkash, whose author calls "Masands" Ramdasias. On our further probe, nowhere in the contemporary records or other relevant records, the word 'Masand' has been used. Hence under the circumstances, it will not be wrong to conclude that the word 'Masand' came into use during the Guruship of Guru Arjan Dev.

Connected with this system, a pertinent question can be asked as to what was the need of this system when 'Manji' system was already existing. There seem to be two reasons for setting up the fresh organisation. In the first instance, the persons holding Manjies were so much engrossed in their work that it was not possible for them to keep in touch either with the Sikhs or with the Guru and consequently they were not in a position to appreciate the difficulties of the Guru and also the new challenges, he was confronting. Secondly, some of the holders of the Manjies had fallen under the influence of Bidhi Chand, the son of Handal who was vehement in his propaganda to denigrate the personality of the Guru and hence all the Manji Holders then could not be relied upon. Thirdly with the lapse of time, the Manji holders had grown lax and lazy.

Under the circumstances there was dire need either to invigorate the existing institution of Manji or to set a new one. The Guru chose the latter path.

Masand system played a great role in consolidating Sikhism. It injected into the body social of the Sikhs the requisite cohesion and tried to devolop in them the habit of remaining in discipline. In times to come, this habit of theirs helped them a lot to save themselves from the onslaught of the Moghul

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Imperialism. Furthermore, the "Masands" used to remit the money offered by the Sikhs to the Guru regularly and this thing went a long way to alleviate the financial difficulties of the Guru—apart from being the first step towards organising the "Guru's Golak" or "Guru's Treasury".

The Guru was aware of the fact that any organisation unless its followers have full faith in its organisers, is sure to meet its doom. To safeguard Masand system against this, the Guru repeatedly impressed upon the people in so many hymns that without abject faith in Guru, salvation was not possible. In Var Gauri, the Guru explained his point of view in full length and with candour. He advised his opponents to have faith in the Guru and in his words, instead of indulging in blasphemy by introducing an edge of disunity among the sikhs. He condemned the people who were scheming to denigrate the exalted personality of Guru Amar Das.

New Customs

In keeping with the policy of his predecessors, the Guru asked his followers to avoid singing filthy songs on occasions such as marriage, child-birth and instead he composed hymns which were akin to 'Ghori'[1] or Sithnian[2] in their form, to be sung on the aforesaid occasions. He composed four hymns known as 'lawan' in Suhi Rag and asked the Sikhs to recite them to solemnize marriages as the 'lawans' embody in themselves a lesson for the pair to develop true love for each other and lead a life of equipoise. Besides, the following hymn was made obligatory for the Sikhs to recite before starting any work.

Ask thy Lord if thou wantest thy work done
Through the true Guru's word, He accomplisheth thy tasks
In the society of the holy, drink thou then the Nectar, the treasure of Good
O Thou, the Dispeller of fear, O Merciful Lord save my Honour
Nanak, by singing thy praises, one knoweth the unknowable Thou[3]

In this way a distinct social code of the Sikhs began to emerge which considerably separated them from the common mass of the Hindus.

1,2. Folk tunes.
3. Guru Granth, p. 91.

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Re-approachment with Udasis

Baba Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak Dev, was the leader of a religious sect of his own known as Udasis. He roamed over the country as a mystic of great repute. In his travels, Baba Sri Chand came to Amritsar to meet Ram Das. On seeing Ram Das, long flowing beard, Baba Sri Chand asked him jocularly why he grew it. "To wipe the dust from thy holy feet," replied Ram Das. Sri Chand replied "It is this magic that has made thee so great and me so small." Thereafter, in the discussion, Sri Chand made frank confession of the superiority enjoyed by the Sikh religion and promised to extend co-operation to him. Indeed, the Udasis, after the re-approchment, spared no pains to serve Sikh religion. After the death of Banda Bahadar, it goes to the credit of the Udasis that, when Moghul rulers decided to destroy the Sikhs root and branch, they who could not easily be distinguished from the common mass of the Hindus, kept the divine spark of the Sikh Faith alight.

Free Kitchen

Like his predecessors the Guru carried on the work of free kitchen with vigour and zeal characteristic of him. He made the arrangements more elaborate, more elegant and more methodical. Proper amount of emphasis was laid on 'Pangat' in the 'free kitchen' and anyone, irrespective of caste, creed, clime, and colour could partake of the food without any hesitation. The caste sytem and pilgrimages were decried and superstitions of various types were denouned.

Proselytising activities of Guru Ram Das

Apart from the steps of the Guru enumerated above which contributed a lot so far as the dissemination of Sikhism was concerned, he sent many of his trusted disciples to different places to spread Sikh faith. He is said to have converted one Handal of Jandiala whom he asked to go and settle in his native village to propagate the new faith. Similarly he sent Bhai Gurdas to Agra to spread the Guru's Gospel. Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak and progenitor of the Udasi sect was won over by the Guru and the age-long rivalry between the two sects of Nanak-Udasis and the Sikhs—actually ended in the truimph of Sikhism. Besides this, Maya, Japa, Kanahaya, Tulsa Dharam Das, Jetha Sansari and Tirath having convinced of the greatness of Sikh mission embraced Sikhism and dedicated their lives to its dissemination.

Friendship with Akbar the Great

This is an admitted fact that Akbar disliked the quarrel between different religions. He, through his experience had known that every religion had grain of truth and true religion lay in the transcendence of self. No wonder the Sikh faith which regarded 'love' as the key-note of its ideology was much liked by the emperor. He paid homage to Guru Amar Das and was much impressed by the institution of 'free kitchen' run

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by him. Guru Ram Das was also held in high veneration by him and in token thereof, he gave 500 bighas of land to him. It is said that at the instance of the Guru, Akbar remitted the land revenue for full one year. Consequently, the Guru grew very popular among the people in general and peasantry in particular.

Estimate

The Guru's work during his pontificate of seven years was remarkable inasmuch as it lent initial impetus to the work of the spread of Sikhism under his successor. The Guru consolidated the Sikhs by giving them a sacred tank, named Amritsar, a distinct organisation, Masand system, and a central treasury by advising the Masands to collect a part of the income of the Sikhs of their respective diocease and then to send the same to the Guru.

Cunningham, however feels that inspite of the fact that Guru Ram Das commanded esteem of the people, he could not attract very large number of converts because after forty-two years of the Sikh movement, the number did not even double. The aforesaid view is unwarranted in view of the fact that in the ministry of Guru Ram Das, Sikhism made its headway at far-off places and various sangats were organised to keep the torch of Sikh faith alive.

Nomination of Guru Arjan as his successor

Guru Ram Das, seeing his end approaching nominated his son Arjan Mal as his successor. This choice of the Guru was much resented by his eldest son, Prithia, who charged his father for having ignored his right to the 'Gaddi' and did not hesitate using even indecent words. At this, the Guru felt annoyed and rebuked him "Be off with you. Never show me your face. You are mean. My Sikhs will never obey thee and will never associate with thee". As a matter of fact, it was Arjun Mal's intelligence, far-sightedness and fore-sight, organising capacity, love for the Divine and spirit of sacrifice that qualified him for the exalted office.

The Guru, having nominated, Arjan Mal, left Ramdaspur (Amritsar) and retired to his old headquarter, Goindwal. After a few day's stay in Goindwal, Guru Ram Das expired on September 1, 1581. Though the period of his Guruship was that of seven years only, yet his achievements occupy a unique place in the history of the evolution and consolidation of the Sikh faith.

The succession of Arjan Mal is of tremendous importance. The fact, that Guru Ram Das appointed his youngest son, Guru Arjan as his successor, decided once for all that succession to Guruship would be decided on grounds of heredity and merit. The succession became "a family and personal concern and

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claims to it were paralleled with those to a throne. In Latif's views "this changed the very character of Guruship and materially contributed to the growth of Sikh power, for henceforward the Guru was looked upon by his disciples not only in the light of a spiritual guide but also as a wordly lord and a ruling sovereign". According to Dr. Narang "The Guru now become such—a Padshah or the true king". The true king ruled his followers not only in the present life but also in the times to come. The orders of the true king were of greater importance than those of a false ones; and herein lay the difference which prepared the Sikhs later to challenge the authority of the Moghuls. In this way, the establishment of hereditary principle in the Guruship proved a step of far-reaching consequences in transforming the character of the Sikhs. The principle of deciding claims to succession on principles of heredity and merit, also minimised the chances of quarrel over the succession to Guru Gaddi.

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Chapter 9

GURU ARJAN DEV
(b. A.D. 1563—d. 1606)

Guru Arjan was born in Goindwal, a small town in Amritsar district, on Tuesday, the 7th day of the dark half of Baisakh (15th April A.D. 1563). He was the youngest son of Jetha ji, later re-named Ram Das, when crowned as the fourth Guru of the Sikhs. His mother Bhani lovingly and reverentially remembered as Bibi Bhani, was the daughter of Guru Amar Das. She enjoyed respect, affection and adoration of the Sikh people for her espousal of the cause of the Gurus. She had the unique privilege of being the daughter of one Guru, the wife of another Guru and the mother of still another Guru—Guru Arjan, a Guru in his own time. The child Arjan was thus favoured by Providence in having a saint of the calibre of Bibi Bhani as his mother and a Guru of the eminence of Guru Ram Das.

Childhood

Though history has not recorded any detailed account of the period of his childhood, yet there is enough to show that the people regarded him as the child possessed of intrinsic greatness. Guru Amar Das was the first to recognise him as a truly blessed child and treated him with utmost care. He was so much impressed by the exceptionally good behaviour and wisdom of the child that he predicted that one day his grandson will be a great Guru[1]; and will produce the boat of Bani to ferry others across. The child Arjan talked of God and loved to sing His praises. He was frequently absorbed in mystic broodings and in meditation, and his general behaviour seemed inspired by some higher motive. The Kal took special note of this laudable quality of the Guru and said :

> Thou O Arjan, has recognised God
> as also the Guru's wisdom from thy very truth.[2]

He was sweet and humble and possessed a tender, a compassionate and a feeling heart. There was an aura of charm, joy around him. His divine grace attracted and pleased everybody. His innocent utterances revealed secrets which were atonce deep and apparently imperceptible. He had

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1. Bani ko Bokith Bach Hwai Hai Bhari Gur Jag Mein Bidte Hai.
2. Tai Janmat Brahm Pachanion.

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sharp sensibilities and susceptibilities. He could express his feelings and reactions to various situations in poetry which was atonce sublime and perfect in poetic art.

Brought up in Sikh's Tradition

Arjan spent his first eleven years and a half at Goindwal and then along with his father, Guru Ram Das, left for Amritsar. During this period, Arjan was fortunate to have ample opportunities to have a first hand knowledge of the views of his father and of the earlier Gurus and as the Sikh records would have us believe, he loved to mould his life in the Sikh style, as ordained by the Gurus. Arjan Dev had two brothers, both elder—Prithi Chand and Mahadev. The latter was more or less anchorite who preferred aloofness from the affairs of the world. He possessed a saintly nature and there was peace in his soul, but he had yielded to the cold and negative aspects of renunciation and had become, thereby, rather other-wordly and individualistic. Prithi Chand was the other extreme. He was thoroughly worldly and very much more. He was utterly selfish, turned into the most unprincipled man. When Arjan Dev reached manhood he developed all the qualities of a great man. His conduct was so good and his behaviour so soul-elevating that people began to regard him 'divine' : Bard Mathura sees light of God in him. He says :

> "There is no doubt that the Perfect Lord hath
> manifested Himself in the soul of Guru Arjan."[1]

Naturally all this raised him in the estimation of his father. This thing kindled jealousy in the mind of Prithi Chand, who began to intrigue against Guru Arjan Dev to discredit him in the eyes of his father. He did not bother about his other brother, Mahadev, although he was next to him in age, because, he being a recluse, did not qualify for guruship.

Education

Guru Arjan Dev did not receive any formal schooling. He learnt Gurumukhi script from Baba Buddha[2] who also initiated him into Guru Bani. He received lessons in spirituality and in the Sikh way of life from his maternal grandfather, his father and his mother. He acquired the knowledge of Persian in the 'Maktab' of Goindwal. He also got instructions in the subjects of Hindi and Sanskrit.[3]

His training in different disciplines opened new casements on his mind's landscape and unfolded new vistas in the geography of his psyche. It gave him a rare expansion of spirit and of his mind which, when he grew to manhood, blossomed into

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1. Har Puran Brahm Niwas Kio Partach Ridai Guru Arjan Kai.
2. Randhir Singh : Punjabi Duniya, July 1953.
3. Dr. Kartar Singh Suri, Guru Arjan Dev and Sant Dadu Dayal. Punjabi, pp. 76-7, Punjabi Lekhak, Chandigarh.

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a vision which was atonce all-comprehensive and all-absorbing and which gave a positive orientation to the Sikh sensibilities and proved to be a beacon-light to the Sikhs in particular and the humanity at large.

Jealousy of Prithia

The Guru grew to be a person of high merit. Naturally, this raised him in the estimation of his father. This thing kindled jealousy in the mind of Prithia, the eldest son of Guru Ram Das, who began to intrigue against Guru Arjan to discredit him in the eyes of his father. He did not bother about his other brother, Mahadev, although he was next to him in age, because he being a recluse, did not qualify for guruship.

Arjan Dev attends the marriage of Sahari Mal

Towards the end of A.D. 1580, the marriage of Sahari Mal, who was the cousin brother of Guru Ram Das was to take place at Lahore. Guru Ram Das was invited to it; but because of his pre-occupations elsewhere, he asked Pirthia to go to Lahore to attend the marriage but he refused. We are told that Pirthia had two motives of his own for refusing. He was in charge of the offerings and was able to furtively set aside much wealth for himself. If he went to Lahore, this legitimate gain would fall to someone else. Moreover, he felt that the time was fast approaching for the selection of a Guru in succession to his father and consequently his presence at Amritsar was necessary. Mahadev pleaded his inability to go to Lahore to attend marriage on ground of his cynical indifference to wordly affairs. Arjan unhesitatingly agreed and forthwith proceeded to Lahore.

Wrote three letters

After the marriage was over, Guru Arjan Das was asked to stay there for some time to look after the affairs of Sangat of that place. Shortly after, he felt the pangs of separation from his father and wrote to him three letters, two of which were intercepted by his elder brother Pirthia and thus withheld from the Guru. A letter marked '3' reached Guru Ram Das safely and Arjan Dev was recalled from Lahore. On his return, Guru Ram Das asked why he put the figure '3' on his very first letter. The truth came to light; and Pirthia was forced to produce the other letters which contained songs of supreme value. Pirthia's deceit was immediately found out and his discomfiture was complete.

Installation on Guru Gaddi

Guru Ram Das embraced Arjan. The Guru sent for five paise and a coconut, placed them before Arjan and descending from his throne seated him on it in the presence of the whole assembly of eminent Sikhs whom he had specially invited to this occasion. Bhai Buddha affixed the tilak or mark of spiritual sovereignty on Arjan's forehead and in July 1580, he was publicly procalimed Guru amid universal manifesta-

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tions of delight. Arjan Dev, at that time, was eighteen years and four months old.

Prithia's open defiance

Pirthia refused to submit and adopted an attitude of open defiance. He quarelled with Bhai Buddha for affixing Tilak and openly charged his father for having shown partiality in the choice of his successor. He vowed that he would seize the Guruship by force. The Guru counselled[1] him not to quarrel with him as it did not behave quarrelling with one who begot him and then reared him. He further advised him not to stand as a rival to Guru Arjan Dev who had richly deserved the honour and told him that his machinations would not enhance his prestige. Pirthia Chand, however, remained constantly contumacious towards his father who was driven to utter "Thou art mina[2] the destestable; my Sikhs will not obey thee, and will never associate. Shortly after, Guru Arjan Dev left for Amritsar and began to carry on the work of Guruship with utmost dedication.

Thou art Mina the detestable

Prithia's attempts to pass himself as Guru

Pirthia's enmity towards Guru Arjan did not abate with the death of his father—rather he redoubled his efforts to seize the pontificate. He conspired with Chaudaries who told Arjan that as Pirthia was senior to him in age, he had no right to appropriate the property of his father. The Guru, thereupon, transferred all the property of his to Pirthia and told him that he, for himself, would in future live on the offerings of his disciples. But even this did not appease Pirthia. He would loot and plunder the Sikhs on their way to Amritsar. He aligned himself with the evil-minded Masands, started preaching that it was Pirthia who was invested with Guruship by Guru Ram Das and not Arjan Dev. Some of the simple-minded Sikhs did come under his influence. He stationed his men on all the paths leading to Ramdaspur with the purpose that they should prevail upon the devotees to go to Prithi Chand to lay their offerings. Gian Singh writes "Pirthia collected offerings from them and the strange thing about the affair is that when the time of taking meals arrived, he would send them to the kitchen of Guru Arjan Dev."

Bhai Gurdas arrival at Amritsar and efforts to foil Prithia's designs

At this juncture, Bhai Gurdas who had been working as a missionary at Agra returned to pay his homage to the new Guru at Ramdaspur, and finding the sad state of affair took into his own hands the management of the Guru's affairs. He tried his best to bring about reconciliation between the Guru and Pirthi Chand, but failed due to the intransigence of the latter. He then sent for Bhai Buddha and

1. Refer to Sarang Moh. 4 Ghar 3 Du-pada.
2. Refer to Suhi Moh. 4.

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other dedicated Sikhs such as Salho, Bhai Gurua, Be.lu, Jetha and Paira who succeeded in counteracting the misleading propaganda of Prithi Chand. Even the Guru decided to undertake tours of the Majha and Doaba regions of the Panjab with two-fold purpose; to spread his mission and to be away from his brother to avoid direct clash.

Enlisted the help of Sulhi Khan

But Prithi Chand would not relent. He made an alliance with one district revenue official, Sulhi Khan and planned to harm the Guru with his aid. The Guru returned to Amritsar towards the end of A.D. 1574 after preaching for five years in different parts of the province. To his surprise and chagrin, Prithi Chand again became active with his nefarious game.

Mazhar

He, in consultation with Sulhi Khan, prepared a complaint (Mazhar) and submitted it to the Emperor probably at Ramdaspur when the Emperor happened to pass by this city while going to Lahore after having the hunt in Shaikhpur Qumargah near the Beas.

ਮਹਜਰੁ ਝੂਠਾ ਕੀਤੋਨੁ ਆਪਿ ॥ ਪਾਪੀ ਕਉ ਲਾਗਾ ਸੰਤਾਪ ॥
ਜਿਸਹਿ ਸਹਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਜਮੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਵੈ ਨੇਰੇ ॥
ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਸਾਚੀ ਦਰਗਾਹ ਬੋਲੈ ਕੂੜ ॥ ਸਿਰ ਹਾਥ ਪਛੋੜੈ ਅੰਧਾ ਮੂੜ ॥
ਆਪਨ ਕਮਾਇਐ ਆਪੈ ਬਾਧੈ ॥ ਦਰਬ ਗਇਆ ਸਭੁ ਜੀਅ ਕੈ ਸਾਥੈ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਨਿ ਪਰੈ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥ ਰਾਖੀ ਪੈਜ ਮੇਰੈ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥
ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ 5 ॥

"God hath himself intervened to prove that the representation is false and the sinner is in affliction. The myrimidons of Death shall not approach him whom my Lord protecteth. He who telleth lies in the True court is a blind fool and he shall smite his head with his own hands. Those who commit sins fall as victims to diseases. God himself hath acted as a judge (to vindicate the honour of His saints). The man (Prithi Chand) bindeth himself as a result of his own (evil) actions. All his wealth shall pass away along with his life. Nanak, my protector protecteth the honour of those who seek the protection of His Court."

Akbar absolved The Guru

In this complaint, Prithi Chand accused Guru Arjan for having usurped his legitimate right to the Guruship and also for showing indifference to the Imperial orders. The Emperor orderd inquiry into the whole affair and as a

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result thereof, absolved the Guru of all the accusations levelled against him. The Guru, in one of his hymns, refers to the complaint, though the name of the Emperor is not mentioned therein. The Guru attributes the discomfiture of Prithi Chand to the grace of God who "himself showed the memorial to be false and adds that Prithi Chand is involved in the consequences of his own acts."

The Guru shifted to Wadali

Immediately after this incident, the Guru shifted to Wadali, a village seven miles distant from Amritsar. On the 14th June, 1595, the Guru was blessed with a son, named Hargobind. This incensed Prithi Chand and his wily wife, Karmo who were feeding themselves on the idea that Guru Arjan would die issueless and as a sequel to it, the pontificate would pass on to their son, Meharban. They in order to achieve their vile objective began to hatch conspiracies to put an end to the life of the infant Hargobind.

Attempts to kill Guru Hargobind

Several attempts were made to this effect. On one occasion, a nurse was sent who poisoned the nipples of her breast and offered them to the child; but while doing so she fainted. Prithi Chand remained unshaken in his resolve and engaged a snake charmer to kill the child by exposing him to a cobra. This attempt also misfired.[1]

After this incident, the Guru came back to Amritsar (1597). Prithia Chand made still another attempt to put an end to the life of infant Hargobind. This time, a Brahman was sent who slipped poison into a cup of milk meant for the child. The child, however, refused to take it and Brahman died of colic shortly after. The evil designs of the Brahman have been referred to by Guru Arjan Dev himself in one of his hymns in 'Rag Bhairo'.

Akbar's visit to Goindwal

After one hour and twelve minutes of the night of the Thursday, he (Akbar) set off on an elephant, Marriam Khan and other Begams and Sultan Khurram were left in Lahore. Khwaja Shams-ud-din was appointed to look after the court and the princes. Mir Murad was Mir Bakhshi and Malik Khair Ullah was appointed to be kotwal. On the 30th Abul-Qasim Tamkin arrived from Kashmir at the fourth stage and had the honour of an audience. On the 13th Azhar crossed the river Biah (Beas) on an elephant at Goindwal while the troops cros-

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1. Dr. I.B. Bannerjee doubts the authenticities of the female nurse and the snake charmer. He feels that these "were later embellishments reared on the edifice supplied by the remarks of the Guru particularly as it is not difficult to trace therein the influence of Krsnite legends." We however, do not agree with him. It is a matter of common knowledge that such conspiracies are woven even during the present-times.

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sed by a bridge. On this day the house of Arjan Kuru (Guru) received fresh lustre by the advent of Shahanshah. His forefathers had been, one after the other, the leaders of the Brahmin caste. He entreated much and as his desire sprang from devotion, it was gratified.[1]

What transpired between the Guru and Akbar, Akbar-Nama or other official or non-official contemporary records are silent; but according to Badaoni, Akbar appreciated the teachings and charismatic personality of the Guru. Khula-sat-ut-Twarikh says distinctly that a small portion of the revenues was actually remitted at the request of Guru Arjan. Sujan Rai states, that 'when Akbar left Lahore and reached Butala he came to know that a fight had taken place between Musalman Fakirs and Sannyasis. He went to the spot and put to prison the Musalman fakirs who had done injustice, and had broken some of the temples. He ordered the temples to be repaired and from there he crossed the Bias and visited the house of Guru Arjan, a disciple and successor of Baba Nanak, and he was very much pleased when he recited some of the poems of Baba Nanak about the unity of God-head. The Guru expressed his obligation to the Emperor for his visit and at the time of his departure represented to him that in the Panjab the price had gone down to this extent that the people found it difficult to pay the revenue. The Emperor accepted his request and issued orders to his officers to reduce the revenue by one tenth or one-twelvth.'[2] The remission of a part of the land revenue increased the popularity of the Guru among the peasants of the area.

The discomfiture of Prithi Chand in his various schemes to encompass the ruin of the Guru's son and the Guru, and the increasing prestige of the Guru among the rulers and the people in general could humble Prithi Chand only for some time after which he again addressed himself to hatching plots against the Guru. In his evil projects, he had his allies Sulhi Khan, and Chandu who had turned against the Guru for his rejecting the offer of Chandu's daughter's marriage to his son, Hargobind.

Prithi Chand depended more on Sulhi Khan in carrying through his schemes. He met him in the village named Kotha where the conspiracy was hatched to deal effectively with the

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1. Akbar Nama (Persian), vol III, p. 801.
2. As per Khulasat-ut-tawarikh (Persian), p. 262, the prices had gone up. We do not agree to this view, our study of Akbar Nama shows that the fact was that the prices had gone down owing to the increased production and the reduction in effective demand which was, in part, caused by the movement of the royal camp towards Agra outside the Punjab.

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Prithia Again conspired against theGuru

Guru. There were perturbations amongst some of the Sikhs. They were frightened at the prospect of some sort of clash that seemed to them almost inevitable. They first met in a congregation and then went to the Guru to carry to him their fears and requested him for some kind of settlement. The Guru counselled them to remain calm and let God's will prevail. He said, he could make no compromise with principle and if he was called upon to suffer for the love of God he was ready for it. He told them to think of Him who would surely protect them, if that was His will. There was, in his great heart, no hatred, no anger and therefore no fear. He was humble to the extreme but he also possessed all the qualities that made a man brave and fearless. The Guru has himself hinted the projected attack of Sulhi, the fears of the Sikhs and the advice he received from them thus :

"First they (Sikhs) advised me to send a letter to Sulhi, then they suggested that I should send some one to mediate and then again they insisted that I should employ some other effective check to protect myself, but I have such a faith in Him that I can think only of Him and of nothing else. I enjoy perfect bliss and equipoise, I believe, as if all my adversaries are slain and so I am in peace. The True Guru hath instructed me that my body, my soul and my possessions all belong to Him. Whenever I do, I derive strength from Him. He is my support and my refuge. O Lord where else shall I go, forsaking there. There is no other equal to Thee. Thy servant hath no fear, it is in ignorance that the worshipper of Maya goes about in the wilderness. The glory, O Lord, cannot be described, Thou protecteth me everywhere. Nanak, Thy servant seeketh Thy refuge alone, for Thou hast protected his honour and bringth him victories everywhere." (Asa Moh. 5)

Mahadev and Bhai Gurdas failed in bringing about reconciliation

At this juncture Mahadev, pained at the unbecoming behaviour of Prithi Chand, tried to deter Prithi Chand from following the course which was atonce wrong and indecent but to no effect. Bhai Gurdas went to Hehar where Prithi Chand and Sulhi Khan were staying. He tried his best to persuade Prithi Chand to agree to some sort of understanding with his brother; but Prithi Chand was bent upon following his own course of action. Bhai ji returned thoroughly disgusted as he gave vent to his feelings in his following verses :—

Gurdas's feelings

ਤੀਰਥ ਮੰਝ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਹੈ ਬਗਲਾ ਅਪਤੀਣਾ ॥
ਲਵੈ ਬਬੀਹਾ ਵਰਸਦੈ ਜਲ ਜਾਇ ਨਪੀਣਾ ॥
ਵਾਂਗ ਸੁਗੰਧ ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਪਰਮਲ ਸੰਗ ਲੀਣਾ ॥
ਘੂਘੂ ਸੂਝ ਨ ਸੂਝਹੀ ਕਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੀਣਾ ॥
ਨਾਭਿ ਕਥੂਰੀ ਮਿਰਗ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਉਡੀਣਾ ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਸੱਚਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਮੁਹਿ ਕਾਲੇ ਮੀਣਾ ॥

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"The crane dwellth on a place of pilgrimage yet it remaineth in discontent. The chatrik drinketh not water to quench its thirst even when it raineth. The bamboo attached to sandle remaineth unperfomed. The owl, the unlucky bird, seeth not the sun that everyone else can see. The musk is in the deer's own naval, yet it wanderth about in quest of the same. The true Guru (Arjan Dev) is the true king, yet the Mina recogniseth it not and his face is blackened."

Death of Sulhi

Undoubtedly, Prithi Chand did not relent his efforts to harass and harm the Guru; but then an incident happened which considerably weakened Prithi Chand. Sulhi Khan whom Prithi had brought to visit his brick-kilns met with an accidental death by his sudden fall in one of his live brick-kilns.

The Guru, in Rag Bilawal says:

"God has protected me from Sulhi
who could do no harm and
died a death of an unholy person".[1]

Sulabhi Khan

After some time, Sulabhi Khan, the nephew of Sulhi Khan reached Punjab. Pirthia won over him with the help of Chandu Shah and conspired with him to harm the Guru; but before the conspiratorial plans could be launched, Sulabhi was killed in an affray with a Sayyad who was refused the payment of the balance of the one year's pay to be paid by his uncle, Sulhi Khan, to his detachment of pathan soldiers.

Even then, Pirthi Chand did not deviate from his course of undermining the influence of the Guru. Foiled in his attempts to oust Guru Arjan, he established a parrallel Gur-Gaddi and initiated schismatic move. When Guru Arjan built Hari Mandir at the centre of the tank of nectar at Amritsar, Pirthi Chand got built a temple and a tank at the village named Haur, fourteen miles distant from Amritsar. Likewise, when the excavation of the tank of Taran Taran was

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1. Bhairo Mahallas : The Lord Huggeth His slave and putteth the slanderer in the fire.

(Bilawal M. 5)

"The lord has protected me from Sulhi, who could do no harm and died a death of an unholy person. The Lord has chopped off his head with His Axe and the man is reduced to dust in an instant. He thought of evil things but is now consumed in fire. He who had created him has now destroyed him too. Nothing of him remaineth, he has left here his sons, friends, riches, brothers and kinsmen. Says Nanak, I am a sacrifice unto that Master who has fully fulfilled the word of His slave."

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started by Guru Arjan Dev, he wasted no time to start digging out a tank known as 'Dukh-Niwaran' at the distance of two miles from Tarn Taran.

Schismatic move by Prithi Chand

In A.D. 1600, the schismatic move as set in motion by Prithi Chand became apparent. The Sikhs were clearly divided in two sections; the disciples of the Guru, and the followers of Prithi Chand. Prithi Chand proclaimed himself as the legitimate Guru. He engaged Rebeck players and bards to sing the praises of Prithia. A separate sacred book (Granth) was got prepared which contained the composition of the first four Gurus After the execution of Guru Arjan Dev, Prithi Chand so conspired that people should regard him as the legitimate successor of Guru Arjan Dev. To some extent, he achieved success and it was on account of this that even Mohsan Fani, the friend of Guru Hargobind, could not clearly see through the game and wrote that after the death of Guru Arjan, guruship passed on to Prithi Chand.[1] The trick of Prithia worked, perhaps because the traditional symbols of guruship viz. Selhi (Rope), Topi (cap), Pothi (Book) and Mala (Rosary), were in his possession. But soon truth became known to the people, although Prithi Chand felt no qualms while upholding himself as the Guru.

Meharban

In 1618, he was succeeded by his son, Meharban who was an erudite scholar and a great organiser. He took various steps to consolidate his followers. He composed 'vani' of the type Guru Arjan did; he undertook tours to various places such as Kangra, Kutlehar, Nehal, Butala, Patti, Meldevki, Mundeke, Gajehli etc. or acquaint the people with his teachings. He enunciated his own programme to the people which was Brahmanical in tone and accent and recommended to the people the paintings of saffron mark on the forehead, asceticism and belief in gods and goddesses. In 1628 when Guru Hargobind had to leave Amritsar as a result of Battle of Amritsar fought between him and the Moghuls, Meharban occupied Harimandir and all other shrines at Amritsar. These shrines remained under the control of the Minas till 1696 when Guru Gobind Singh sent Bhai Mani Singh to assume control. Notwithstanding all this, the sect bifurcated itself into two-sub-sects Dewani-Sadhus and Sodhis under the stewardship of Harji, the son and successor of Meharban. Things were allowed to drift on with the result that the differences between the aforesaid increased to such an extent that each sect claimed an entity in itself. With the lapse of time, Dewani-Sadhus who started reposing faith in asceticism and behaving like a sannyasi became

1. *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, Naval Kishore Press, Lucknow, p. 234.

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part of the Hindus. The fate of the other sect was also no different; it, being Brahmanical in approach and accent, vanished into the fold of Hindus.

CONSOLIDATION AND EXTENSION

The mission of Sikhism had been made clear by its founders, namely to establish a society on the basis of social equality bound by the ties of faith in the one-ness of God and supported by the firm belief of detesting any kind of restriction on the worship of Him. Attempts were made by Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das, but still the road was long and the goal was distant.

Problems

Still the people were in tight grip of superstitions, demeaning rituals and debasing customs and totems. Still various religious cults, jogies, Shaivites, Vaishnavities were active in their preaching of obscurantism, particularism, and esoteric ideals. Akbar's liberalism instead of being utilised by the Hindus to fashion response to new challenges was used to rehabilitate or perpetuate the orthodox Brahmanical beliefs and caste-ridden social orgnisation. Naturally, the protagonists of Hindu orthodoxy were unhappy about the progress of Sikhism which was essentially anti-Brahmanical in character. The Brahmans felt that, owing to this new creed, their position was being undermined and their hold on the Hindu masses had weakened. Therefore, they were severely critical of the Sikhs and their Gurus.

No wonder, in the compositions of Guru Arjan Dev, one can easily find many verses ridiculing—even condemning the self-styled critics.

Apart from all this, the Guru had to reckon with the Muslim revivalist movement with its headquarter at Sirhind. It was started by a Muslim divine, Shaikh Faizi Sirhindi Mujaddad-i-Alf Sani to whom even slight concession to the Hindus was an act of hostility to Islam. He advocated the view that 'the glory of Islam consists in the humiliation of the infidelity and the infidels. Giving a place to them in one's company, sitting and talking with them, all are means of showing esteem. They (the infidels) should be kept at a distance like dogs'. About Jazya taken from the infidels, he held, its real purpose was to humiliate them (the non-Muslims) and this humiliation should reach a stage where, owing to the fear of Jazya, they should not be able to wear good clothes, and should never enjoy any peace of mind and be in constant dread and fear of the King's taking away their property. He had no sympathy for those people who believed that Ram and Rehman were the

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same. To him such a comparison was an act of extreme stupidy because he was of the opinion that Rama and Krishna of the Hindus were no more than 'the lowliest of sweepers'. His views about the Muslim shariat were very rigid and he poured abuse upon everything that he did not understand or could not fit into his ideology. He was thus the antithesis of Abul Fazal and was akin to Badauni in the desire to imprison the mind in the narrowest theological vision. The attitude of Shaikh Faizi Sirhindi towards the contemporary Sikh movement is evident from some of his letters.[1] This movement had its devoted votaries in Government circle. Shaikh Bukhari, a close confident of Jahangir was a noted disciple of Shaikh Faizi. It is possible that Sulhi Khan's keen interest in Prithia's case was caused by his devotion to the ideals of the movement.

All was not O.K. in political sphere as well. No doubt, Akbar's favourable attitude saved Sikhism from the fury of the Muslim orthodoxy at a time when it was just an infant needing protection, and provided the necessary conditions for the quick further progress; yet the situation changed with the accession of Jahangir to the throne at least for some time, in favour of those who assailed the liberal trends in Akbar's policy. There were some powerful people at the court of his father who were opposed to his accession and favoured his son Khusro in preference to him. Even Akbar at one time had shared the same view, feeling sore as he did at the rebellious conduct of Jahangir or Salim, as he was then called, during the evening of his life. At this critical juncture, the orthodox detractors of his father's enlightened liberalism came to Jahangir's rescue and smoothed his way to the throne. Thus when he ascended the throne, he not only did not have his father's opposition to the Muslim orthodoxy but was also in a frame of mind to oblige them, should an opportunity arise.

The composition of the votaries of the Sikh movement had also thrown new challenges. The bulk of the people who came into the fold of Sikhism as the result of the efforts of the earlier Gurus were drawn from the commercial classes mostly dwelling in towns. These people possessed, in ample measure, intelligence, wealth, organising ability, and practical knowledge of affairs of the world. Now it was incumbent on the part of the Guru to utilise them so as to dig the foundation of the movement deeper and deeper. The entry of the peasants into the fold of Sikhism, particularly during Guru Arjan's period warranted new adjustments in the body-social and the body spiritual of the movement. It became imperative for the Guru to frame programme to harness their proverbial energy and enterprising spirit in the interest of the Sikh community and the

1. Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani, Vol. I, letter No. 163, 69, 47, 193.

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ideals it stood for. Obviously, it was no ordinary task because to strike harmony between the mercantile class and the peasantry was a baffling problem in view of two things viz., firstly the jats, as a rule, were not accustomed to any discipline whatsoever and secondly there was wide divergence between their respective outlooks and interests.

The personal factor also played its role in strengthening the hands of the opponents of Sikhism, as for instance, Prithi Chand, the disgruntled elder brother indulged in all sorts of intrigues to damage the position of Guru Arjan Dev as the head of the Sikh movement. Through his machinations, he even succeeded in inducing Government official, Sulhi Khan, to attempt an attack upon the Guru. Not only this, Prithia tried to harm the cause of the movement by setting up parallel pontificate and also starting schismatic move. The strong Sikh tradition regarding the intrigues of Dewan Chandu Mal of Lahore, who bore ill-will to Guru Arjan Dev on account of the latter's refusal to accept the hand of his daughter for his son, Hargobind, also points to the part played by the personal factor in strengthening the anti-Sikh forces in the country.

He seems to have found that the process of the growth of the Sikh movement demanded the setting up of such institutions that might symbolise and project the Sikh ideals among the people. Before him, sufficient work had been done by his predecessors; yet more was to be done. As the institutions began to disintegrate the society morally, socially and politically, it became rotten, in-animate and fell an easy prey to the political greed and religious and social tyranny of the Muslims and the Hindus.

Unbaffled by the complex and difficult environment and notwithstanding the troubles fomented by his brother Prithi Chand, he addressed himself to the task of consolidation of the Sikh community and extension of Sikh faith. His method to achieve his objective appears to have been the outcome of the conviction that the civilization becomes in-animate only due to the corruption and intractibility of its institutions. As a matter of fact, a civilization cannot be crushed by superior arms or numbers; it always commits suicide. So his approach to the malady was institutional, social and psychological—first to mould or build anew the required institutions of the society and then with their assistance to achieve the object. The most important of his steps, which Guru Arjan took during his ministry (1581-1606) were as under :—

(1) Completion of Amritsar and foundation of cities like Tarn Taran and Kartarpur and Hargobindpur.

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(2) Setting up of Masand system.

(3) Preaching Tours.

(4) Fostering of interest in trade and industry.

(5) Compilation and editing of Adi Granth.

COMPLETION OF AMRITSAR AND THE FOUNDING OF CITIES LIKE TARN TARAN, HERGOBINDPUR AND KARTARPUR

The Guru completed the unfinished work of excavating two great tanks—Santokhsar[1] (Tank of Patience), and Amritsar (Tank of Nector). Bhai Buddha, the most trustworthy disciple of the Guru was appointed to supervise the work of construction. The side-walls and the floor were constructed with the collective efforts of community. Having completed 'tank of nector' the Guru laid the foundation of the Hari Mandir, now called the Golden Temple, in the midst of the tank of Amritsar, in middle of January 1589[2] at the place where Guru Ram Das used to meditate. According to Sikh tradition, the Sikhs represented that this temple should be higher than all the other buildings in the neighbourhood. The Guru replied that "Hari Mandir should be the lowest edifice of all because what is humble, shall be exalted." According to Khazan Singh, when the Guru was going to lay down the foundation stone, the famous faqir, Mian Mir, who was a great friend of the Guru happened to go there to see him. Out of his respect, the Guru asked him to lay the foundation-stone of the said temple. This was perfectly in the fitness of things as the Guru stood for the pluralistic society.

The Guru, by doing so, made it known to the people that the Harimandir belonged to all, irrespective of caste, creed, and clime. Unlike Hindu temples, the doors of the Temple were open on all sides, signifying that the Sikhs worship was open to all. After the completion of the construction of the temple, and the tank in 1589, the Guru said, "The pilgrimage to this place has the value of all the Hindus' sixty eight goals of pilgrimages". The work of construction went on smoothly.

When the construction of the tank and temple as also the laying out of the garden was completed, the Guru felt jubilant. The Guru honoured all those Sikhs who had put in dedicated service to ensure the completion of the projects. Eminent among such people were, Bhai Buddha, Bhai Bhagtu,

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1. Santokhsar completed in 1789 (1645 BR).
2. Harmandir was completed towards the end of A.D. 1789.

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Bhai Bahla, Bhai Kalyana, Bhai Ajab, Bhai Ajaib, Bhai Umar Shah, Bhai Sangho and Bhai Salho, and Bhai Jetha. Bhai Buddha was assigned the task of interpreting and communicating the Guru's message to the people at Hari Mandir. Bhai Bhagtu was instructed to go to the Malwa region of the Panjab to kindle the flame of Sikh faith in the minds of the ignorant people of the area. Salho was made the superintendent of the city to look after its development. Omar Shah, Kalyana, Jetha Parana opted to stay with the Guru. Bhai Ajab and Bhai Ajaib also served the Sikh cause in ways more than one.

The Guru, at this juncture, composed hymns which not only are superb pieces of poetry but also provide peep into the working of the mind of the Guru.

A careful study of his hymns would show that the work went on smoothly, unimpeded and unhindered by anyone. No harm occurred to any one during the course of construction. The Guru seemed to have been apprehensive of some trouble on account of the intrigues of his elder brother Prithi Chand, and on the successful completion of the work, he, in a prayerful mood, says 'The creater hath stood in the midst of His own work, and therefore not a hair of anyone's head is injured. The Guru (Guru Ram Das) hath overcome all difficulties in successfully bringing out the pilgrimage place, where the worship of the Lord washeth off all sins.'

The motifs of Guru Arjan Dev are also amply clear in his hymns. In Rag Suhi Guru Arjan Dev says, about the temple, "The Temple of God is created to promote the worship of the Lord. His saints and devotees should sing here His praises and throw off all sins by dwelling on Him. Through singing His praises the blessed state is attained, so uplifting is the word of the Lord. The word expresseth the extremely sweet state of equipoise and the Glory of God. Auspicious is the opportunity, true the time and the true moment when the unshakable foundations were laid. Nanak, He hath been Merciful and the work is accomplished so well. The transcendental Lord hath come to stay in my heart and now blissful music is continuously being played within me....."

The completion of the tank was not only a matter of joy for the Guru, but it also provided an occasion to the Guru to be overwhelmed with the sense of gratitude to all those who put in their services day and night and the Almighty. The Guru says "The Lord hath Himself come to superintend the work for his saints. How beautiful is the place, the tank

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over it and nector water within it." In the fulness of his heart, the Guru proclaimed :

"He who here-below singeth a song of rejoicing over this work
Shall obtain the fruit his heart desireth.
He who while meditating on his God
Cometh to bathe here shall be made safe and whole
He who batheth in the saint's tank
Shall obtain final salvation."

It can easily be judged that this declaration was to make the tank and the temple the most important spots of pilgrimage. The Guru, in esctasy, went on extolling the temple, the tank and every other thing associated with them, but did not make fine distinction between bathing of one kind and that of another kind. The Guru, undoubtedly, did mean that the pilgrimage in merely physical sense[1] might be undertaken; in fact such pilgrimages had no relevance to Sikh style.[1] He, on the other hand, regarded pilgrimage centres as the places to provide inspiration to the seekers and opportunities to saints to get together and think of ways and means to ensure spiritual progress.

Since the tank and Harimandir were hallowed and made luminous by the Guru's utterences, the city of Ram Das Pur (now called Amritsar after the name of the tank) acquired importance automatically and soon began to be regarded the most important place of pilgrimage.

The Guru himself sanctified it through his utterances and by building his residence there. The Guru says,

I have seen all places; there is not another like thee
For those were established by the Creator-Lord Himself, who blest thee with Glory
O, Ramdaspur, how thickly populated thou art and wearest unparalleled beauty
And who never batheth in thy tank, is rid of his sins.
[Page 1362, Guru Granth Sahib.]

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1. "One who hath gathered filth in the mind and batheth at a place of pilgrimage will not go to the Heavens."
(Kabir in Asa)

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The Guru asked the Sikhs to settle in Amritsar and by way of encouragement, all types of facilities were provided to them. One of his most devoted followers, Bhai Salho was assigned the duty to see that the largest number of the Sikhs settled in the new town. The Sikhs, thus settled, were also encouraged to engage in trade and industry. In this way, Ram Das Pur or Amritsar became a flourishing town and metropolis of Sikh activities.

Importance

Architecture

The city, tank and temple are important from many points of view. The layout of the city, tank and the temple speak volumes in favour of the architectural sense of the Guru and motif provided by him. Whereas the tank and the Hari Mandir in their lay-out and mural paintings and decoration represented Indian style, the domes and minarets symbolised in themselves the Persian style, being extensively used by the Muslims in India.

Chief place of pilgrimage

Apart from it, since Guru Arjan regarded Hari Mandir as chief place of Sikh pilgrimage, the Sikhs obtained thereby a fixed central place of worship where the disciples annually assembled round their Guru and performed their ablutions in the nector tank.

Centre of Sikh Activities

Amritsar because of the residence of the Guru and central place of worship here-at, became the centre of the Sikh activities.

Mecca of the Sikhs

Common rallying point

According to G.C. Narang 'not only was the importance of the new town increased by Arjan as the chief place of Sikh pilgrimage, but by transferring his headquarter to the place, he made it centre of Sikh activities. It became, in fact, the capital and metropolis of the infant commonwealth that the genius of Guru Arjan was gradually and peacefully building up'.[1] "Indeed the Guru gave a Mecca to the Sikhs to prove as integrating factor just as the seven pilgrimage centres (Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kashi, Kauchi, Avanbka and Dwarika of the Hindus) proved to be the cementing force among the Hindus in the past, or it became as important as Jerusalem is to the Jews and Mecca to the Musalmans". Captain Bingley calls it "a common rallying point of the Sikhs and there is no doubt that ever since its completion, the city of Amritsar has always acted as the spiritual capital of the Sikhs".

In addition to the completion of the unfinished work of his father, the Guru undertook the construction of several new towns, tanks and edifices. In 1590, the Guru chose a strategic

1. Dr. Gokal Chand Narang : Glorious History of Sikhism, p. 49.

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site for building a new town "in the heart of the Majha tract, or middle country lying between the Bias and the Ravi. Guru Arjan excavated a tank and built a temple there-at, the tank was named Tarn Taran. Round the temple, the city developed which also began to be called Tarn Taran.

Tarn Taran

Both the cities (Amritsar and Tarn Taran) because of their location in the Majha tract of the Punjab, exercised profound influence on the peasants of the area. In fact, it was the light that radiated from Amritsar and Tarn Taran that made this peasantry realise their strength and transformed them from peaceful and toiling peasants into fiery soldiers and rulers of the soil which their ancestors had ploughed a few generations before them.

Importance of Tarn Taran

This admission of the Jats into Sikh faith is very significant. The temperament and habits of this new element speeded up the process of transform the Sikh religion into militant religion; and it is because of this, that in the later Sikh history, we hear more of fiery Sikh soldiers ready to fight against the enemy and lay down their lives for the sake of the Guru than quiet devotees leading pious life and worshipping Name only.

To spread Nanak's Gospel in the Jullundur Doab the Guru founded a new city, Kartarpur, in 1594. A well was also dug there and it is said that the first sod of the well was cut by the Guru with his own hand. The well was called 'Gangsar' or the Ganges Tank. The Sikhs were advised to regard the water of the tank as sacred as the water of the Ganges.

Kartarpur

The Guru also constructed a Baoli in Dabbi-Bazar of Lahore when he visited the city. Tradition goes that the expenditure incurred on Baoli was borne by one, Wazir Khan who was a devotee of the Guru.

Baoli

The Baoli was filled up by Shah Jahan who erected a mosque in its place. Maharaja Ranjit Singh re-excavated the Baoli. In 1947, it was destroyed by the Muslim fanatics. Another city, Sri Gobindpur, on the Beas, was built to celebrate the birth of his son. Moreover, he got a well sunk at the distance of a few miles from Amritsar at the place, now called as Chheharta.

The religious centres thus built up served as a strong adhesive force for the rising Sikh community. The Sikh Sangats from far and near were drawn towards these holy centres and visited them whenever they could, some of them even making regular annual visits. During these visits, the various Sangats had the opportunity not only of meeting the Holy Guru and having his blesssings but also of coming into close contact with one another. They were provided free accommodation and free food during their stay. Guru Ka

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Langar (Free Community Mess) which had gradually developed into an enduring institution was adequate for the purpose of feeding all the people who wanted to eat there. The food of Langar being considered sacred, there was hardly any one who would like to miss it. Simran (participation in the daily religious services, some of them conducted in the presence of the Guru himself) and Sewa (participation in the community projects and the Guru Ka Langar) were the two major constituents of the daily routine of the visiting Sikhs. In consequence unbreakable bonds of union were formed which imparted solidarity and cohesion to the Sikh ranks, fused the far-flung and diverse unity into a single well integrated organisation.

PREACHING TOURS OF THE GURU

Khadur Goindwal Sarhali Bhaini

Immediately after the completion of Hari Mandir, the Guru went on his proselytising tours in the Majha region of Punjab. He first visited Khadur Sahib and Goindwal and thencefrom he proceeded to the village of Sarhali where he sought to obtain land to build a dwelling for himself. A Sikh of the village Bhaini invited the Guru to his place. When the Guru in response to the invitation reached the village, it was late evening. The lady of the house saw that the Guru was hungry, but at the same time, it would take a long time to cook food She, therefore, prepared a dish called churi (broken bread mixed with butter and sugar) and laid it before the Guru. The Guru took it with unusual relish, not merely for its sweetness but really for the loving, devotion and loyalty behind it. The Guru stayed at the place for many days to enjoy the love of the people, and in turn to serve them with his own Chohla (spiritual food). The village, in course of time, was renamed as Chohla Sahib (sacred Chohla).

Khanpur

Leaving Chohla Sahib, the Guru and his party proceeded towards the village, Khanpur. A big building in the heart of the village could be seen from a distance. Bidhi Chand, one of the devoted Sikhs of the party, was much pleased inwardly that a comfortable shelter for his Guru would be found at the place. But the Guru thought otherwise. He preferred to stay with the poor and he enjoyed their hospitality. Also he would not go to people who did not want him. He told Bidhi Chand that he was in no hurry for a shelter and that if there was a true seeker in the village, he would himself come to welcome them. But Bidhi Chand insisted and the Guru allowed him to go. The occupants of the house were approached but they not only refused shelter but also laughed at him. He came back sore and disappointed.

Hema, a very poor resident of the place, who earned his living by grinding corn for the people, came to know of the Guru's arrival. He rushed to the Guru and placed his

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poor dwelling at the Guru's disposal. He also offered his whole-hearted personal service. The Guru was pleased beyond measure. He had an instinctive kinship with those who lived by the sweat of their brows. The Guru remained for some time in Khanpur. In the meanwhile, Hema expired and the Guru attended his funeral. At this place, the Guru dwelt at length, on the theme of possessions and wealth in his teachings. He told the people that he regarded wealth as a trust to be used not for personal gratification and self-aggrandisement but for the service of others. The Guru uttered :

Be thou His trustee and then there
is not pain (that wealth ordinarily causes)[1]

(Guru Arjan in Basant)

Alluding to Hema the Guru said that he, being moral and ethical in conduct was far better than those who conducted themselves unethically. "The hut of a moral man is more than a mansion if His praises are sung in that. There is a real pleasure even in poverty provided God is remembered in the company of his saints. May that material glory perish which is tied up with Maya (illusion). Blessed is the turning of handmill (refers to what Hema was doing) or wearing a course blanket if the mind is at peace with itself and is happy and contented with what it has. They who are but soaked, naked in the love of God are honoured while vain are Silk and Satans, the love of whom maketh man greedy."

Khaira

From Khanpur, the Guru proceeded towards the village Khaira. The place had its attraction for the Guru on account of its exquisite beauty and perfectly natural environments. He felt, he was in the lap of nature and decided to stay for a longer period than originally planned. The people of the village were much respectful towards the Guru. In fact, the Guru's teachings brought about new consciousness among them who began to look upon the Guru as their heavenly benefactor. Shortly after, it struck to the Guru that a headquarter might be established there to spread the Sikh point-of-view. With this end in view, he procured a piece of land from the villagers on which he laid the foundation of what came to be known as Tarn Taran, and proceeded to construct a tank for the devotional ablutions of his Sikhs (A.D. 1590). The name Tarn Taran means a raft to take men across the sea of life. The Guru, at great expense, built brick-kiln and caused bricks to be

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1. ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਕਰਿ ਪੋਤਦਾਰੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਦੂਖ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ।

[Page 1182, Guru Granth Sahib]

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Plan to found Tarn Taran

baked. The local official named Nur-ud-din seized the bricks for the construction of a *serai* that was being built at Government expenses. The Sikhs resented this high-handedness on the part of Nur-ud-din and suggested to the Guru to write to the Emperor to allow the tank to be finished and strike fear in Nur-ud-din. The Guru refused to take notice of the outrage, as he preferred to avoid a clash. He left quietly off for better times for the completion of the project. After some time, the tank was completed and it became the important place of pilgrimage.

Kartarpur

The Guru then crossed the Beas and proceeded to the Jullundur side were he purchased land to build another city to be named as Kartarpur (the city of Creator). The Guru with his own hands cut the first sod for the construction of the city and its accompanying well to supply water to the inhabitants. The Guru named the well to be *Gangsar*.

There is an interesting anecdote as to how the well came to have the name. A person named Baisakhi had a regular yearly programme of going on pilgrimage to the Ganges. He was told that Kartarpur had itself become the Ganges at the time, for any one to see, if one knew the true meaning of pilgrimage. The Guru's presence in Kartarpur and the holy congregation, that met there daily served the purpose of pilgrimage. But Baisakhi looked at things in a superstitious way and could not be persuaded so soon to change his mind. After the visit was done and he was about to return, he lost his vessel in the Ganges while attempting to fill it with its sacred water. On his return, the Guru produced his vessel from out of the Kartarpur well. Evidently the biographer has missed the beautiful metaphorical meaning behind this little story by accepting the details too literally. Baisakhi had a very narrow, mechanical and superstitious approach as to the purpose of a pilgrimage to a holy place. He believed like so many other people, that a mere physical dip in the Ganges would provide him salvation. For him, there was something in the waters of Ganges that by itself purified. He had thus lost the vessel of true nector (Amrit) that he would have brought from there if he had faith in the right value of things. That really was the meaning of his having lost the vessel of a sacred water. Baisakhi had looked at the matter in physical terms only and therefore could not bring the real Amrit from the holy place. He was awakened in Kartarpur to realise the spiritual significance of this Amrit. In the company of the holy Guru, the vessel of the true Amrit was restored to him and he realised that it was futile on his

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part to have wandered about purposelessly when Amrit was so richly available at Kartarpur itself.

Visit to Nakka region

Having stayed at Kartarpur for some time and preached in the Doab area the Guru proceeded to the country known as Nakka in response to the invitation of Bhai Bhria, Chaudhri Chuhar Mal and other pious Sikhs. He visited Khem Karan, Chunian and other villages where he preached with great success. He then went to Janehar, where he remained for some time during which he converted Kidrana, Kheda, Samdu, Mukanda, Tulsa, Lalu and others.

Lahore

The Guru then proceeded to Lahore at the request of the Sikhs who resided there. He rested in Dabbi Bazaar on the site of the present Guru's Baoli, and planned its construction. People of all classes flocked to listen to him. According to Macauliffe "Thither came the jogi, Sambhunath and the Hindu saints, Kahna and Chhajju, the Muslim Saints Shah Hussain, Shah Suleman, Shah Inayat Qadari, Shaikh Wali Shah, and many other seekers, both among the Muslims and non-Muslims. Wazir Khan, the governor of Lahore who had liberal religious propensities was also much impressed by the Guru's piety. It is said that he offered to excavate the Baoli at his own expenses.[1]

Dehra Baba Nanak

The Guru then went to the shrine of Guru Nanak at Dehra Baba Nanak wherefrom he proceeded to Barath to see Sri Chand, the son of Guru Nanak. After mutual salutations, both of them conversed on various topics. Sri Chand asked why the Guru wandered hither and thither and did not reside at Amritsar. The Guru told him that since Prithi Chand was distressed at his residing there he deemed it better to be away from him. Moreover, the interest of the religion warranted that he should be among the people. Sri Chand was astonished at the sordid behaviour of Prithi Chand and condemned him.

After this, the Guru returned to Amritsar, after a tour of about five years. The Guru had started his religious travels in A.D. 1589 and completed the same in A.D. 1594.

The Guru sojourned at Wadali for about three years. According to Bhai Santokh Singh "The people flocked round him from different corners and were awakened to new realities. The people from Kabul, Peshawar, Kashmir, Balkh, Bukhara

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1. Sahib Singh says, that in 1597, the area around Lahore was in the grip of famine but our study shows that this is incorrect. The Guru visited these places on his own or in response to the requests of his devotees to communicate his message.

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and Multan came to him and were simply inspired by his splendid personality and meaningful utterances. The villages the most important of which were Madar, Chunian, Bahrwal were paid visits by the Guru in 1597. In A.D. 1598, the Guru reached Goindwal where Akbar during his return journey to Agra, sojourned and had a meeting with the Guru.

SETTING UP MASAND SYSTEM

The process of integration of Sikhism went hand in hand with the enlargement of its ranks. Guru Nanak, during his missionary tours felt the need of some organization to carry on the work he had started. Accordingly, he established Sangats at various places such as Eminabad, Tolumba, Nanak Mata, Khatmandu, Kabul, Jalalabad, Bushahar, Jagannath Puri, Patna and Ceylon etc. Each Sangat was in the charge of a leader appointed by the Guru. The position of the leader, as we learn from 'Life of Guru Nanak' written by Sewa Das in 1588, was called the Manji, because he sat on the Manji or cot when preaching to the people.

Bhai Lalo was preaching in the North and Sheikh Sajjan in the South West of the Punjab. Gopal Das was in Benaras, Jhanda Bedi in Bushahar, Budhan Shah in Kiratpur, Mahisar a priest's son in Jagan Nath Puri, Dev Lut in Lushai (Tibet). Salis Rai In Patna and Bihar, Raja Shiv Nabh in Ceylon and a host of other workers scattered over the whole territory visited by Guru Nanak in and outside India. Connection with the centre was kept up by the constant visits of the Sikhs to the Guru. During the time of Guru Amar Das the missionary work became more regular and methodical. Guru Amar Das divided the Sikh spiritual kingdom into twenty two bishoprics, each called a Manji. Each of these Manjis (bishoprics) was placed in the control of an expert, whose duty it was to preach Nanak's Gospel. With the lapse of time, the incharges of Manjis became corrupt and careless. As a consequence of it, many Sikhs had been left uncared for or unattended. Guru Ram Das, having understood that the Manji system, at best, could serve only limited purpose, established the nucleus of a new order of missionaries, called Masands. The purpose of Guru Ram Das to do so was three-fold; firstly he wanted to spread Sikhism at a rapid pace; secondly he had planned to construct the tank of Amritsar and Santokhsar and the city of Amritsar and for the completion of these projects, wanted to collect money from his followers; and thirdly, he wanted to develop among his followers a habit to live under some organisation.

Masands, then known as Ram Rajas, worked well during the short span of the Guruship of Guru Ram Das; but immedi-

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ately after his death, the Masands indulged in petty squables and faction-mongering. Greed and not creed attracted them the most. Many of them openly championed the illegitimate claim of Prithia against the legitimate claim of Guru Arjan Dev, because in doing so, they felt they would comparatively free to grabbing the offerings of the Sikhs and to pursue their personal ends.

Obviously, Guru Arjan Dev could not depend on the Masands appointed by his father; nor could he do without some sort of organisations—more so because the range of Guru's activities had considerably widened. His manifold enterprises in building and excavation required a more steady flow of resources and the immense increase in the number of the Sikhs required some planned effort to keep liaison with them. Accordingly he organised Masand system afresh. Apart from appointing new Masands possessed of integrity and sincerity, he gave new dimensions to the system. He gave clear-cut instructions to the Masands to the effect that they, henceforth, would look after both the secular and spiritual affairs of the Sikhs. They would foster among the Sikhs their interest in trade, industry and other avocations, besides giving them an organisation to keep them together and providing them guidance as and when it was desired. They were also required to collect Daswandh which the Sikhs were enjoined upon to contribute to Guru's treasury (*Golak*). Daswandh was levied for the maintenance of the Sikh Church. The Sikhs paid Daswandh to the Masand whose duty it was that he should submit the amount thus collected to the Guru regularly and procure a receipt against that. It should, however, be remembered that the Masands could not touch a penny out of these offerings, as the Guru's instruction was that whoever used these offerings, his body would be polluted.

Some scholars have expressed that Daswandh (1/10th) of income was raised under compulsion. Cunningham has equated it with tithe of the Christians. Both the views are wrong. It was never raised under pain of threat or force; it was a voluntary contribution given by the Sikhs to their Guru in token of their faith in Guru's works. Cunningham, I.B. Bannerjee and a few others who have expressed their belief in employment of force on the part of the Guru to raise Daswandh, have done so because they relied upon the translation of a paragraph from Dabistan-i-Mazahib by Shea and Troyer. We have studied the original paragraph and reached the definite conclusion that, 'Daswandh' was never considered 'a tax' by the author (Mohsan Fani) nor was hinted anywhere by the author that the use of force was made in realising 'Daswandh'.

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Furthermore, it is odious to equate Daswandh with tithe. There is no doubt that both were religious levies, and equal in amount; but in the former case contribution was voluntary while in the latter one, a Christian had to pay if he wanted to seek the banediction of the Christ. Daswandh was, more or less, a social obligation or at best an obligation on the part of a disciple towards his Guru and had got nothing to do with man's spiritual ascent while 'tithe' was regarded something extremely sanctified and an obligation of a Christian to attain spiritual elevation.

Furthermore, the Masands were required to pay visits to Amritsar at the annual Baisakhi fair to receive instructions from the Guru and to hand over the amout of Daswandh offered to them by the Sikhs. Regular accounts of these offerings were kept and receipts were issued to the Masands.

At certain places, since the number of the Sikhs had increased enormously, the Masands found themselves incapable of coping with their huge task. Hence they appointed their own delegates called *Sangatia* or *Masandia* or *meoras*. Their main duty was to collect Daswandh or tithe and hand them over to the Masand to be deposited in the Guru's Treasury.

The Masands, apart from performing their financial functions, were vigorous preachers They, like the present-day Christian priests, kept a record of the religious condition of their people which served not only to the Masands who prepared it but also to those who succeeded him. As was expected, these measures led to the emergence of a large number of a new Sikh sangats in the country. The mode of initiation of prospective Sikhs through the ceremony of *charanamrit* was allowed to all authorised missionaries. The ideal charanamrit was the one administered by the Guru himself, but since it was not possible for the Guru to be present everywhere, the authority had to be delegated to the local missionaries who were given the freedom to enrol new members of the Sikh sangats through the administration of charanamrit prepared by themselves in the prescribed manner.

Importance of Masand System

Masand system as an institution accrued many benefits and undoubtedly played a significant role in the evolution of the Sikh movement. It trained the Sikhs in secular affairs and introduced a sort of order to which the Sikh masses became habituated.

It attracted a large number of converts. According to Mohsan Fani "the number of these sectaries increased every-

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where, so that, in the time of Guru Arjan it became very considerable and at last there was no place in any country where Sikhs were not to be found." The Masands worked so hard that Sikhism spread to the provinces far distant from the Punjab.

This institution was also responsible for keeping the Sikhs in touch with the Guru. The Masands served as the link between the Guru and the Sikhs. They received the instructions from the Guru and passed them onto the Sikhs. This thing had two-fold effect, firstly it increased the influence of the Guru on the Sikhs and secondly the Sikhs were constantly reminded that they were under the care of their spiritual mentor. Moreover, the system ensured a ready flow of the resources to the Guru's treasury and also ensured the solidarity of Sikhism. Narang points out 'the Guru could now arrange his budget with more certainty as the dues of the Guru's were paid more readily and unfailingly than even the Mughal revenues.' This thing enabled the Guru to build temples, excavate tanks and construct cities.

Besides this, the prestige and fame of the Guru increased. Masands, as it has been said earlier, used to come to the Guru regularly at the annual Baisakhi Fair to submit the collected amount of 'Daswandh' and the report of the religious affairs. All this sounded as if the 'Jagirdars' visited the court of the Emperor with presents and tributes. Taking cue from it, the Sikhs began to call their Guru as '*Sacha Padshah*'.

Masand System became rotten with the lapse of time

With the lapse of time, the Masands grew corrupt. The spirit of faction gripped them and they began to neglect their duties; they even misappropriated most of the Guru's offerings. Some of them even went to the extent of conspiring against the Guru. After the death of Guru Hargobind, a party of Masands instigated Ram Rai to fight for Guruship against his brother Har Rai. After the death of Guru Harkishan the Masands created a number of difficulties for Guru Teg Bahadur. Some of the Masands joined Dhir Mal and made frantic efforts to start Guruship parallel to that of Guru Teg Bahadur. Sihan, a Masand, even fired at Guru Teg Bahadur. Later on, when Guru Teg Bahadur went to Amritsar to pay a visit to Hari Mandir (Golden Temple), the Masands, holding the charge of the temple, shut its doors to the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh, finding this institution in a rotten condition abolished it in 1698 and told the Sikhs that they would henceforth be considered as Khalsa, 'God's Own'.

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Masand System— A regular Govern-ment or what ?

By evolving Masand system, Cunningham says that the Sikhs became accustomed to a regular Government[1]. His view is shared by some of the later writers. According to Trumpp, the Sikhs were gradually accustomed to a kind of Government of their own, and began to feel themselves as a family organised and strong party within the State. Dr. Narang was of the view that the Sikhs had already become accustomed to a sort of self-Government within the empire.

A careful probe into the matter would reveal that they based their conclusion on one of the paragraphs written by Mohsan Fani, in his book "Dabistan-i-Mazahib", who, in their opinion, says that the Guru used to collect taxes from his followers through his officials, known as Masands. We have gone through the paragraph carefully and we are sure that the learned scholars failed to interpret the paragraph correctly[2]. Nowhere did Mohsan Fani mention that the Sikhs had to pay taxes. On the other hand he used the word 'Nazar' or 'Bheint' for Daswandh and it would be a travesty of facts to equate 'Nazar', 'Bheint' with taxes. In view of this, to impute political motives to the Masand system or to mistake it for Governmental machinery is far from real facts, although there is no doubt that the Sikhs regarded it a sacred duty to pay 'Daswandh' to the Guru inspite of the fact that no compulsion was employed to collect the money and no mundane advantage was held out to them. As a matter of fact, the emergence of a new social group with new vigour and outlook was mistaken for a new political force which certainly, at that time, did not exist, although there is no denying the fact that the social cohesion has, more often than not, been a pre-condition to political changes.

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1. Cunningham : History of the Sikhs, p. 47. Reprint published by S. Chand & Co , 1955.

2. According to Prof Ganda Singh and Teja Singh 'The mischief began with the wrong translation of passage by Shea and Troyer, Vol. II, page 271, which was being copied by Cunningham and others, and the cry has been repeated since then without verification'. The correct translation, however, is as under :

   Through that, the Masand people became Sikhs of the Guru. The Chief Masands, through whom great multitudes became Sikhs of the Guru appointed their own deputies until in every place and district, the associates of a Masand through his deputy became Sikhs of the Guru.

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FOSTERING OF INTEREST OF THE SIKHS IN TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Trade

It had, by now, become clear to the people that Sikhism was a religion of householders and regarded asceticism as negation of true dharma. The Gurus were never tired of hammering this idea upon their followers that 'the life of the hermit was no avail' and leading the life of a householder by which somebody may gain was better than putting on a sectarian dress. This being so, the Guru wanted his followers to lead a prosperous and happy life. He, therefore, encouraged them to take interest in trade, industry and banking. Macauliffe narrates stories showing that the Guru personally took interest in developing taste among the Sikhs for lucrative horse-trade with trans-Indus countries. This step, though apparently most ordinary, was productive of manifold good to the Sikhs.

Significance of the step

It proved to be a required response to the needs of the Marcantile class. It gave spiritual sanction to the mercantile activities which, expressed in communistic terminology formed a progressive group at that time. Its social effects were no less important.

Effective Blow to caste system and Hindu superstitions

It dealt an effective blow at the stringency of caste and Hindu superstitions. It went a long way in breaking down the barrier what prevented the Hindus from crossing the Indus. It also tested and strengthened the faith of the Sikhs, for it required a staunch belief and strong character to come out unscathed through a fanatical and aggressive population like the Mohammadans of the trans-Indus territories. Horse-trade being lucrative in those days, enriched the Sikh traders and brought large contributions to the coffers of the church.

Foundation of future armies

It laid the foundation of the future armies of the Khalsa by developing a taste for riding among the Sikhs who gradually became the finest horsemen in the Northern India. Moreover it was made known to the people beyond the frontiers of India the emergence of a new socio-religious group committed to social equality and belief in the oneness of God.

Did the Guru conduct the trade activities ?

According to Cunningham 'it is probable that his transactions as a merchant were extensive, although confined to purchase of horses in Turkestan'. Trumpp also subscribes to the aforesaid view. But there is no evidence to prove the authenticity of the above view. According to Dr. Indu Bhushan Bannerjee, the basis of the view of Cunningham was the Sikh sources whose reliability is doubtful; and this being so, it is not possible for us to agree with Cunningham. Moreover,

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even in Dabistan-i-Mazahib, Mohsan Fani, the friend of Guru Hargobind did not make mention of this fact; although the Guru brought a few horses to be kept at his stable; and in this connection a certain person named Sadha was sent to Iraq for purchasing horses for him. He brought three beautiful horses for the Guru but was robbed of them by a tyrant, n amed Khalil Khan. Thus it is clear, the Guru never traded o n his own; though he never hesitated to bring horses for his stable from trans-Indus countries.

DISCIPLINE

The Guru laid great emphasis on the individual and social discipline. He condemned caste system in un-equivocal terms and advised the people not to indulge in drinking. The widow-remarriage which was allowed by Guru Amar Das was preached with greater emphasis—so much so that the Guru himself persuaded Hema Chowdhari to marry a widow. As a matter of fact, the Guru disliked the custom of denying the right to the widows to remarry. He opened asylum for lepors' at Tarn Taran and did his best to provide the medical facilities and other requisite amenities. He considered the faith in untouchability as anathema to Sikh religion. The Guru required his followers to observe certain rules of conduct and dicipline. Bhai Gurdas says, 'a Sikh was to rise from his bed during the last watch of the night and have his bath in the river or the tank. He would then repeat the Name as instructed by the Guru in silence and absolute concentration. His next duty would be to go to the Sangat and there recite and listen to the hymns of the Gurus with deep reverence. At sunset, he was to recite the Sodar and at night after reciting the Sohila, he was to distribute sacred food. The Sikh was thus given a simple and well ordered scheme for the practice of the Name. Moreover, he was asked to observe certain ceremonies and cultivate discipline. He was to be pleasing in his words and practise humanity and humility in his conduct. He was to sleep little, eat little and talk little and associate primarily with persons of his own way of thinking, besides being unceasing in his devotion and service to the Guru.

The cumulative effect of all these steps was that the ideas of Sikhism were made clear, institutions created to sustain and propagate the message of Sikhism and to fraternize with the masses, and Adi Granth enshrining the sacred words of the Gurus compiled and edited to suffuse Sikh culture and Sikh ideas among the people. The number of the Sikhs increased manifold. According to Mohsan Fani "In short, during the time of

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each Mahal or Guru, the Sikhs increased in number till in the reign of Guru Arjan Mal, they became numerous and there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not to be found." Emperor Jahangir also testifies this statement. The progress of consolidation of Sikhism upto the death of Akbar had been entirely peaceful with practically no interference from the established state, which, on the contrary, had on occasion been friendly and helpful. But then an incident took place which changed the course of history of the Sikh faith. In the new epoch that was about to commence, circumstances entirely changed, methods became openly violent and the state stood out in determined opposition to Sikh faith. But it should always be remembered that the new was not new in the sense we often understand, it was, in fact, the reaction of the Sikh psyche as built by the Gurus to the changed circumstances and hence it was conditioned and shaped by the old.

MUGHAL—SIKH GURU RELATIONS AND MARTYRDOM OF GURU ARJAN DEV

Akbar's favourable attitude

The emergence of the Sikhs as a community did not disturb Akbar as it could not because of his liberal-mindedness and his appreciation for the teachings of the Guru. Nor could the poisonous propaganda of the enemies of the Guru make him angry with the Guru. Prithia, in league with Sulhi Khan, a Moghul official of the Revenue Department, lodged a complaint with Akbar to the effect that the Guru had usurped Guru Gaddi which, in point of right, belonged to him and the Guru did not care for the Moghul officials in this respect. The Guru explained his position and Akbar dismissed the complaint. At another occasion (1594), another complaint was lodged that the Guru had prepared a Granth (a sacred book) which blasphemed both Hindu and Muslim prophets alike. According to Macauliffe[1] Akbar ordered the Guru to explain his position. The Guru sent Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Budda alongwith Adi Granth to the court of Akbar. They recited a few hymns of Adi Granth which had their profound effect on the Emperor who expressed his desire that many more of this kind were needed. Foiled in their designs, Prithia instigated the Brahmans and Qazis to say that the aforesaid Shabads were selected by Bhai Budda and Bhai Gurdas specially for the occasion. At that, Akbar opened the Granth himself and asked them to read, but nothing came to his notice which was wrong. On the other hand, the Emperor expressed that this was 'the first great scripture of synthesis'.

1. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, Vol. 3-4, p. 82, 83.

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Akbar's favourable attitude did not merely save Sikhism from the fury of the Muslim orthodoxy, but it provided necessary conditions for its quick further progress. The strong and efficient administration of the Emperor Akbar established peace in the land which enabled the Sikhs to march ahead unhindered by local revolts and foreign invasions.

According to Badaoni, on another occasion namely the thirteenth of the month of Azur, Akbar, with a gorgeous military retinue, crossed the Beas and went to Goindwal to visit Guru Arjan whose teachings and character he appreciated[1]. The Emperor partook of the food at Langar, and, in token of his appreciation of the Guru's work, offered to make a contribution to the Guru's large expenditure which the Guru declined politely. Moreover, the Emperor remitted the revenues to some part of the Punjab for that year in compliment to the Guru. This remission of the revenue considerably increased the fame and influence of the Guru.

Orthodox Khatries and Naqshbandis disliked Sikh community

All the same, a few Muslim and Hindu officials were unhappy at this and disliked the mounting prestige of the Guru. Among the Hindu officials, the most important were Kalanaurie Khatries including Kahna who had managed the jagirs of Salim since A.D. 1593, while the most important Muslim officials who bore enmity towards the Guru were Sulhi Khan and Sulabi Khan. Besides this, the conservative section among the Muslims also regarded the Sikh movement with suspicion. This section in the Punjab was led by the Naqshbandi order headed by Shaikh Sarhindi.

Jahangir's attitude vis-a-vis Sikh Gurus

Akbar died during the night of October 25, 1605 and was succeeded by his son—Jahangir. With his succession, the religious policy underwent a radical change at least for the first two years. There was nothing unnatural about it because the Sunni Musalmans were his chief supporters during his fight against his father, and at the time, when Akbar, in consultation with Aziz Koka and Raja Man Singh, was planning to enthrone Khusro, the charming, liberal and brilliant eldest son of Jahangir. Even at the time of succession the orthodox detractors of his father's enlightened liberalism smoothed his way to throne. Thus when he ascended the throne, he not only did not like his father's opposition to the Muslims orthodoxy but was also in a frame of mind to oblige them, should an opportunity arise. It was this frame of mind and the desire to please

1. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, Vol. 3-4, p. 84.

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Muslim orthodoxy that was responsible for the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. It is also possible that in view of the Rajput party, propping up the claims of Khusro, he himself developed prejudices against the non-Muslims. Accordingly, as Smith would have us believe 'he began to practise the Islamic rules which had no room in the Mughal administration during Akbar's time. Moreover, he started the policy of persecution so far as the non-Muslims were concerned'. The actual handling of the administration and state affairs convinced him of the futility of his policy and undoubtedly he abjured it and followed in the footsteps of his father inasmuch as his religious policy was concerned but in the initial few years of his rule, his religious policy was anti-Non-Muslims.

Jahangir's remarks in his Tuzak

Jahangir, in his autobiography gives the account of this affair as under :—

"In Goindwal, which is on the river Biyah (bias), there was a Hindu named Arjan, in the garments of sainthood and sanctity so much so, that he had captured many of the simple-hearted of the Hindus and even the ignorant and foolish followers of Islam, by his ways and manners, and they had loudly sounded the drum of his holiness. They called him Guru and from all sides stupid people crowded to worship and manifest complete faith in him. For three or four generations (of spiritual successors) they had kept this shop warm. Many times it occurred to me to put a stop to this vain affair or to bring him into the assembly of the people of Islam".

"At last, when Khusro passed along this road, this insignificant fellow (meaning the Guru) proposed to wait upon him. Khusro happened to halt at the place where he was and he came out and did homage to him. He behaved to Khusro in certain special ways, and made on his forehead a finger-mark in saffron which the Indians call Qashqa and is considered propitious. When this came to my ears and I fully knew his heresies I ordered that he should be brought into my presence and having handed over his houses, dwelling places, and children to Murtaza Khan (Shaikh Farid Bukhari) and having confiscated his property I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures."

Charges

In his above statement the Emperor has levelled two charges against Guru Arjan:—

(i) the popularity of the Guru as a religious and worldly leader amongst the Hindus and the Muslims;

(ii) the visit of rebel prince Khusro to Goindwal, whom the Guru is said to have blessed with a saffron mark on his forehead.

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Charges refuted

The first charge may be accepted as correct. It is an undeniable fact that Guru Arjan carried out the reforms and organisational work to such an extent that the Sikhs became more or less a compact community, in command of an efficient and extensive organisation reaching even to the farthest corners of the provinces and even beyond. The well-knit organisation of the Sangats and the Masands not only kept the Sikhs together and in touch with their leader, but also provided them with funds necessary for common purposes and familiarised them with a kind of self-government, however imperfect it might have been. The separation from the Udasies and the barring of the door to asceticism had made Sikhism essentially a religion of householders, a religion which aimed at harmoniously valid worldly pursuits with a true religious life. The spectacle of a religious teacher at the head of such an extensive organisation and with a body of followers who had been taught that to sacrifice their all for the Guru was the highest and the most meritorious act, and whose sense of brotherhood and love for each other transcended all other feelings, could not but disturb the equanimity of the established state. A question may be asked as to why Jahangir put the matter in the language which the staunchest ulemas would have envied. The answer to it lies in the circumstances in which Jahangir was destined to work.

TWO MOVEMENTS

(i) Sikh Movement

Punjab was witnessing two movements of great importance. One was the Sikh movement which because of its egalitarian character, its accent in favour of the low and the privileged, and its anti-ritual tone had a mass appeal of its own. Guru Arjan Dev's inspiring leadership made it still more popular. Under him, it not only consolidated itself; but also it began to influence all walks of life—social, religious and literary. The foundation of cities, digging of tanks, spirtualising the secular life, sanctifying the literary activities, compiling and editing Adi Granth and holding of darbars—all these activities created a sort of furore in the Punjab. Many Hindus and Muslims came under the spell of the Guru's faith and became converts with the result that Islam could now get fewer number of converts.

(ii) Naqshbandi Move ment

The second movement was that of the Revivalists spearheaded in the Punjab by the Naqshbandis. For some time past, the puritan Muslims had been feeling disturbed and agitated over the religious policies of Emperor Akbar whose toleration and liberal attitude towards non-sunni Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, and the introduction of Divine Montheism or the Din-i-Ilahi were interpreted as anti-Muslims and derogatory to Islam. This feeling was particularly strong in the Punjab, firstly, because of

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the Sikh movement which was claiming converts from among the people who otherwise could have entered into the fold of Islam and secondly because of the innate desire of the orthodox Muslims to the effect that the Punjab should remain safe for the Islam to take root and flourish. Naqshbandi revivalists who were headed in the Punjab by Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi Mujaddi-id-Alf-i-Sani, a disciple of Khawaja Baqi Billa represented the aforesaid mode of thinking. They were very bitter against the non-Muslims including the Sikhs. According to calculated plans, the revivalists approached the influential souls of the Mughal empire to support the successor of Emperor Akbar on the condition that there was a complete change in the Imperial policy towards the non-Muslims and that the Islamic laws would be upheld and applied according to Mujaddid's interpretation. Shaikh Farid Bakhari was one of the staunchest advocates of the revivalist movement and was a confident of the hair-apparent, Salim (later Jahangir) to the Imperial throne.

Khusro's Revolt and Naqshbandi's Role

Circumstances so conspired that Prince Salim burst into rebellion against his father in A.D. 1601. A reconciliation was, however, effected through the paternal magnanimity of the Emperor who publicly recognised Prince Salim as his heir to the throne. Rumours and reports continued to be circulated that, in reality, Akbar approved of the nomination of his grandson Khusro as his heir to the throne and desired to be succeeded by him rather by his rebellious and intemperate son. This set in motion intrigues and counter-intrigues with particular efforts for winning support for the contesting parties—Prince Salim and his son Khusrau. The proposal of the Khani-Azam Aziz Koka and Raja Man Singh to exclude Prince Salim as unworthy in favour of his son was stoutly opposed by a number of nobles. This afforded a very favourable opportunity to the adherents of the puritan revivalists to exact from Prince Salim as a price for their support to his claims to the Imperial throne on two solemn oaths binding him in the first place to defend the Islamic religion against non-Muslim heathenism, and in the second place to wreak vengeance upon those who had at any time in the past, espoused the cause of Khusro. Salim gladly accepted both the conditions and took the required oaths.[1] Shaikh Farid Bukhari had also secured active cooperation of the Sayyads of Burha who were well-known for their religious zeal and martial valour[2]. The combination of Burhas with Shaikh Farid greatly strengthened the side of the Prince Salim who succeeded to the throne without much opposition. In the event of the revolt of Khusro, Shaikh Bukhari's services were

1. Smith—Akbar : 301-303, 311, 316, 321-23.
   Beni Prasad—History of Jahangir 51, 61-2.
2. Beni Prasad—History of Jahangir, p. 62.

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laudable and in token thereof, Jahangir honoured him with the title of Murtza Khan, and the grant of the jagir of Bhairowal. In this way, the orthodox section of the Sunnis particularly the Mujaddid's followers had risen very high in the estimation of Jahangir, and to please them the Emperor used the language soaked in rabid communalism as he could not ignore their reports. They, on their part, took full advantage of the mood of the Emperor and conveyed to him the report of the meeting of Khusro and the Guru in the manner they liked. Jahangir atonce acted possibly to assuage the feelings of the orthodox section of the Muslims and to look as the defender of their faith in consonance with his promises. According to Dr. Ganda Singh, the revivalists pushed their scheme through Shaikh Farid Bukhari. Jahangir did so only as a time-serving expediency because he, as history knows him, was not much of a religious man himself. Moreover, when he was firmly established in throne, he ceased to champion the orthodox policy.

Crisis precipitated

The cirsis which was, in fact, the product of the socio-spirito-political nature of the Sikh Movement was precipitated by Khusro's affair. Khusro, the eldest son of Salim, possessed amiable personality and qualities of head and heart, was much loved by Akbar who, at one time, in view of the refractory behaviour of Jahangir had thought of nominating him as his successor. Akbar, however, abjured the idea of superseding the right of his son—Jahangir, when he tendered apology.

Death of Akbar and Sequel

On the 24th/25th October, 1605 Akbar died having put the Royal turban on the head of Jahangir, and hung the sword round Jahangir's girdle. But enmity between Jahangir and his son Khusro did not end. Khusro, because he was popular among the liberal Moghul nobility and Rajput party and had the solid backing of his father-in-law Aziz Koka, and his maternal uncle, Raja Man Singh, expected a special treatment from his father, while on the other hand, Jahangir was suspicious of his designs and asked him to remain within the four walls of the Agra Fort. Exasperated at not getting his expected due, Khusro after five months of the succession of Jahangir (April 6, 1606), came out of the fort alongwith 300 soldiers on the pretext that he would like to pay a visit to the mausoleum of his grandfather, Akbar, at Alexandria, five miles distant from Agra. Having come out of the fort, he raised the standard of revolt and moved to Lahore, evidently in the hope of gaining adherents in the north-west. On the way, Hussain Beg Badakhshi joined with his contingent of 300 horse-men. Abdur-Rehman, the Dewan of Lahore also joined. Thither he was closely pursued by Shaikh Farid Bukhari followed at a short distance by the Emperor himself. The Shaikh followed the

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same route as was followed by Khusro crossing the river Beas at Goindwal, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the rebel prince near Bhairowal.

Khusro's Visit to Goindwal

Absolutely unnerved at the defeat, he came to Goindwal and paid his visit to Guru Arjan Dev, perhaps he was looking for a straw to save himself from the proverbial drowning tragedy. The Guru welcomed him, as a religious Guru ought to have done and according to Jahangir, "painted saffron colour on the forehead of the prince". Mohsan Fani says that the Guru offered prayer for the Khusro. Shortly after, on April 27, Khusro was captured alongwith some of his companions while trying to cross the Chenab. Khusro was put in prison and hot iron bars were moved in his eyes to make him permanently illegible for the throne because Islamic laws would not allow a blind man to occupy the throne. Hussain Beg and Abdur Rehman, Khusro's most trusted lieutenants, were tortured to death ignominously having been sown in the skin of cows.

Enemies managed to connect the Guru with Khusro's revolt

The enemies of the Guru, possibly the followers of Mujaddi-id-Alfi-i-Sani managed to connect the Guru with Khusro.

On or about 23rd of May, a report was poured into the ears of Emperor Jahangir that during the short halt of Khusro at Goindwal, on the right bank of river Beas, the Sikh Guru Arjan had gone to see the prince and had conveyed to him some preconceived things and had also blessed him with a saffron mark on the forehead. Hearing this, the Emperor ordered the Guru to be brought into his presence, confiscated his property and sentenced him to a torturous death—yasa-o-siyast.

But the facts were otherwise

This was practically a month after the Guru was alleged to have blessed the prince and some twentyseven days after the Emperor himself had crossed the Beas at that very place. This makes the whole thing a puzzle and throws a very serious doubt on the genuineness and authenticity of the report. The fact that for twenty-seven days from April 26, when the Emperor appears to have crossed the Beas at Goindwal and was encamped at Jhabal on May 23, there is no reference whatsoever in Tuzak in any way involving Guru Arjan in the affairs of Prince Khusro or of any of his accomplices. If the Guru had met and blessed Khusro at Goindwal, it would certainly have been reported to the Emperor on the spot or in its immediate neighbourhood where it could have been easily verified and authenticated by eye-witnesses and the Guru would have been arrested and carried a prisoner with him to Lahore. But, in fact, nothing came to the ears of His Majesty for as long as a

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month. So far as the details of the report as recorded by Jahangir are concerned, the Guru was not a politician to be in any way interested in the rebellion of Prince Khusro against his father Jahangir who had been on that throne hardly for six months; nor had the Prince met the Guru after the accession of his father to prompt the Guru to have any pre-conceived things to be conveyed to him.

Teeka Mark of Saffron—a concoction

As for the Qashka or teeka-mark of saffron by the Guru on the forehead of the Prince, it is, on the face of it, a pure and simple concoction of some conspirator's fertile imagination to exploit the emotions against the Guru. Never in the whole history of the Sikh Gurus, there has been any occasion for any Guru to anoint anyone, Sikh or Non-Sikh, with a teeka. According to the Mehma Prakash of Sarup Das Bhalla, the Guru took pity upon the prince in misery and provided him with food, obviously, from the Guru's langar (Free kitchen) open to all wayfarers (sakhi No.143—1-4). He makes no mention of any teeka or financial help.

Thus the allegation against Guru that he was involved in propping up the cause of Khusro falls flat as historically unsound.

Chandu Lal did not play any role

Some Sikh writers however, set the matter in somewhat different light. They hold Chandu Lal responsible for the Guru's martyrdom. Chandu Lal got angry with the Guru on account of the latter's rejection of the offer of his daughter's hand to the son of the Guru.

During Akbar's reign he could not achieve his end because of the liberal religious policy of Akbar, but he, according to Sikh tradition, did succeed in poisoning the ears of Jahangir against the Guru. When Jahangir came to Lahore, it is said that he did his best to breed hatred in the heart of Jahangir for the Guru. He is alleged to have said "He possesses inexhaustible fund of wealth; all rajas and big Zamindars are his devotees and no time is lost without alluring some conspiracy against the Govt." Sikhikars also blame Chandu Lal for having insinuated that the Guru extended help to the rebel and, on the basis of this, they attribute the sole responsibility of the Guru's execution to Chandu Lal.

We have examined the Moghul records and we are sure that there was no Dewan of the name of Chandu Lal, but at the same time, the Sikh records are unanimous in relating the story of Chandu Lal. This being so, we understand that Chandu Lal might be a big financier or a descendant of some dewan whom the people called Dewan in the same way as in

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modern times, persons are named after the exhalted post which once their respective forefathers held. But Chandu Lal as the sole or even major cause of martyrdom of the Guru would be totally wrong. Similarly some scholars attribute the martyrdom of the Guru to the machinations of the Khatris of Lahore and Prithia but such elements as these could provide, at best, peripheral cause, the real cause being furnished by the hostile attitude of the Muhammadan orthodoxy, headed by Shaikh Sirhindi and its inability to tolerate the rapidly growing Sikh movement.

The Guru summoned to Lahore

In reference to the summons of Jahangir, the Guru along with his trusted disciples, Bhai Bidhi Chand, Bhai Sangat, Bhai Piara, Bhai Jetha proceeded to Lahore. No enquiry was made; no trial was held. In fact, he did not feel the necessity of doing all this. He himself became a prosecution witness as well saying 'I fully knew his heresies'[1]. He issued the orders of tortuous death against the Guru. The Emperor took no notice of details and left the whole thing into the hands of Shaikh Farid Bukhari, his favourite general and the chief man responsible for the suppression of his son's rebellion.

It was during the captivity of Guru Arjan Dev at Lahore (May 24,30, 1606) that according to Jesuit records "certain gentiles (heathens or Hindus) interceded on behalf of their holy man and in the end he was allowed to purchase his freedom for a hundred thousand crusados (about two lakhs of rupees) for which a wealthy gentile became his surety. The wealthy gentile, referred to above, was presumably Chandu Lal of Sikh tradition. The author of the Dabistan-i-Mazhib also says that Guru Arjan Dev was arrested and fined and since the Guru was unable to pay the fine, he was executed.

Both the above authorities make a mention of fine levied on the Guru. "But their information apparently is based on hearsays on what was circulated by the official sources or interested parties to absolve the reigning Emperor of wanton tyranny in the eyes of the public. The Emperor in his sentence makes no mention of the fine whatsoever. And in the face of his clear sentence of a tortuous death, it is extremely difficult to give credence to the story of the fine and of its non-payment being the cause of the Guru's persecution. It is said that even after the judgement, a Muslim Pir, named Mian Mir tried to intercede on behalf of the Guru; but the Guru told him to let the Divine Will have its own course.

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1. BUTLAN-i-ORABA—WAJAH-i-AKMAL MIDANISTAM. (TUZAK)

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The story that the Guru was subjected to all sorts of inhuman tortures by Chandu Lal to wreak his vengeance upon the Guru for his having refused his daughter's hand for his (Guru) son Hargobind or to coerce him to accept it even at that stage is, without doubt, nothing but a baseless invention of the fanciful mind of some poets fed upon the imaginary stories of ancient Indian literature, "Granting (only for augument sake) that there is some truth in the story, it cannot be easily accepted that Emperor Jahangir or Murtaza Khan Shaikh Farid Bukhari, the defenders of the Islamic faith, handed over Guru Arjan a Kafir-accursed of hearsays and treasonable complicity in a rebellion against the Emperor to a Hindu 'Kafir (who might have set him free), in the face of the Emperor's clear orders to put him to a tortuous death. And this would reduce the historical martyrdom to a personal vendetta which, evidently, it was not, as we know it from the evidence of the *Tuzuk*. It may also be mentioned here incidentally that the name of Chandu Lal is not to be found in the Tuzuk or any other contemporary or semi-contemporary works on the reign of Jahangir. To say therefore that "at the time Chandu Lal was the Emperor's Diwan or Finance Minister"[1] is not historically correct.

HOW WAS THE MARTYRDOM EFFECTED ?

According to Sikh tradition[2] the Guru was made to sit on the hot plates beneath the fast-falling burning sound. After this, he was put in a couldron and as a result, his body suffered blisters all over. Then he was threatened to be sewed up alive in the fresh hide of a cow. The Guru asked premission to bathe in the river, Ravi. Permission having been granted, he entered into the water of the river and breathed his last. According to Mohsan Fani, 'the Guru died of the heat of the sun and of ill-treatment'. No doubt the Guru suffered death because of ill-treatment; but he could not commit suicide as Sikh tradition would have us believe, firstly suicide was in contravention of the tenets of Sikhism and secondly, it was not in keeping with the spirit of the order of Jahangir. Kesar Singh[3], the author of Bansavli-Nama, Rattan Singh Bhangu[4] and

1. Macauliffe : *Sikh Religion*, III, pp. 70-3.
   Forster's *Travels* : I, p. 258.
   Cunningham : *History of the Sikhs*, p. 55.
2. Santokh Singh : Gur Partap Suraj Granth RAS4, ANSU37.
   Macauliffe : Sikh Religion Vol. III, p. 98.
3. Kesar Singh : Bansavali Nama charan V., 141.
   ਸੋ ਬਧੇ ਹੀ ਚਿਤੇ ਨਦੀ ਰੁੜ੍ਹਾਏ
4. Prachin Panth Parkash, p. 534, lines 17-8.
   ਕਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਅਰਜਨ ਦਰਿਆਇ ਨ ਖੋਰਬੋ

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Munshi Sohan Lal state that the Guru did not throw himself into the water but was thrown by the Moghul officers in order to add to the agonies of the Guru. That he was thrown into the Ravi was also reported by a newspeper published in Lisbon in A.D. 1609. Moreover, the Guru fully aware of the intentions of the Government from the very beginning and his resolve to vindicate his stand could have not committed suicide.

The mode of the torture of the Guru was in consonance with the Changezian rule of Yasa, according to which a person is put to death without spilling even a single drop of blood.

Was the Guru a Political offender?

The question 'Was the Guru executed on account of his anti-state activities or was he a political offender ?' has been examined by almost all the noted scholars since it had been first posed and discussed by Sir J.N. Sarkar. Sir Sarkar says that there is nothing abnormal about the execution of Guru Arjan and such punishments were the usual punishments of revenue defaulters of those days. Sarkar regards the Guru as revenue defaulter because the latter refused to pay the fine imposed by the Emperor. It appears that Sarkar finds ample justification on the part of the Emperor so far as the imposition of the fine was concerned and feels no qualms while justifying the tortures inflicted on the Guru on grounds of current usage But a careful reading of the statement of Jahangir would prove that the story pertaining to the imposition of fine is based on heresay on what was circulated by the official sources or interested parties to absolve the unreigning Emperor of his un-remitting tyranny in the eyes of the public. The Emperor in his sentence makes no mention of the fine whatsoever. "And in the face of his clear sentence of a tortuous death, it is extremely difficult to give credence to the story of the fine and of its non-payment being the main cause of the Guru's persecution. Could anyone dare disobey the order of a despot whose word was law. Moreover, Sarkar ignores various other circumstances connected with the execution of the Guru. Guru Arjan Dev was not a revenue defaulter but he was made out to be so by trumping up charges against him and at his bold stand, labelling him as 'seditious' or 'revenue defaulter'. I.B. Bannerjee regards the view of J.N. Sarkar as perversity of judgement which can hardly be excused in a historian.

Jahangir levelled the charge of treason against the Guru for his 'so-called' complicity with the rebellious Prince Khusro which he vindicated by affixing saffron mark on the Prince's forehead. A moment's examination will reveal that this charge of Jahangir was altogether untenable. In the first place, we should bear in mind the words of the Emperor given earlier

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in this chapter, which show that the Emperor's wrath had been excited against the Guru on religious grounds. In the face of Emperor's words, connecting the Guru with rebellious prince must be taken with a grain of salt; for the grounds for the presumption are strong indeed that the story of the Guru's treason was either concocted with the knowledge, perhaps the connivance, of the Emperor or was grabbed at by him as affording a suitable opportunity to demonstrate his zeal for the cause of the Sunni Musalmans with whose help he was able to succeed to the throne and to thwart the designs of Khusro and his party.

Apart from this, there are other considerations in favour of the presumption. If we read the Emperor's Memoirs, we find that he had pretty sure means and agencies for getting information about the movements of the Prince and about the people who helped him in his rebellion. At Karnal, Sheikh Nizam Thaneswari came to wait on him; but since he had heard that Sheikh had waited on Khusro and having gratified him with pleasant news again led him out of the path, Jahangir refused to be flattered. Sheikh was asked to 'depart for the auspicious place of pilgrimage (Mecca)'. That is, he banished from the country this Sheikh who had shown sympathy with Khusro. Similarly in all places, the partisans of Khusro were punished on the spot and those who remained loyal to the Emperor were rewarded.

On the 16th of Zi-ulhaji the Emperor halted at Sarai Pazi Ali; on the 17th he halted for the noon at Sultanpur and in the afternoon reached Goindwal. Thence, marching along the road that passes by Tarn Taran to Lahore, he proceeded on his journey receiving regular reports about the behaviour of the people of each locality towards the rebellious Prince. On 26th he encamped at village 'Jaspal', seven Kos from Lahore and entered the fort of Lahore on the 8th of Moharram. All this time while travelling through the country where the Guru's influence was the greatest, even halting at the place where the Guru was later reported to be living, passing through Tarn Taran so near Amritsar, the Emperor did not hear a syllable about any connection of the Guru with Khusro, though reports were regularly being received on such matters. Surely, if what was later alleged had been true and the Guru had really helped the Prince in the alleged manner, the spies and the informers of the Emperor would certainly have told him of all this long before he reached Goindwal. They had done this in all other cases. How could have they failed in this. Obviously, the Emperor's order to execute the Guru was a after-thought and no such charge was levelled against the Guru till long after the rebellion had been quelled and the Prince had beed arrested

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and punished. Is it not significant that the charge against the Guru was preferred against him over twenty days after the Prince had been punished and over one month and five days after his having halted at the place where the Guru was reported to be living ? How could the Emperor's vigilant informors have failed so long to discover the fact, if fact had been of a person of Guru Arjan's position and fame having helped the Prince ?

There is yet a further consideration. Sheikh Nizam Thaneswari, who stood guilty of the offence as was alleged against the Guru but his punishment was very mild. On the other hand, the Guru was given the severest punishment. This very clearly highlights the fact that considerations other than treason weighed upon Emperor's mind.

Again, on the way to Lahore five attendants of Khusro were captured. Two of them who confessed having served Khusro were executed and the other three who denied the charge were placed under custody with a view to conducting inquiry into their case. But in the case of the Guru, no inquiry was deemed necessary. The capital punishment was passed at once. The haste shown by the Emperor in pronouncing judgement was certainly un-becoming and shows that the real cause of the Guru's execution was not Guru's political activities but something else.

In the paragraphs given above, Jahangir says that the Guru 'behaved Khusro in certain special ways and made a saffron mark on the forehead of the Prince as a gesture of blessing in favour of the rebel'. But Jahangir nowhere mentions the exact impact of putting the saffron mark on the forehead. Was it meant to assist Khusro in his contest against Jahangir ? Certainly not, because it is a matter of commonsense that the Guru could not but ill-afford to do so because firstly Khusro having suffered defeats was no more than a broken reed and secondly the Guru had no resources to help the Prince. The real fact is that the Guru was not interested in any claimant to the throne. Had the Guru meant to assist the Prince, the Emperor must have given some of the details in 'Tuzk-i-Jahangiri'. Since Jahangir in his autobiography is silent on this point, this amply proves that the Guru had not participated in Khusro's revolt in any way. It is, however, possible that he might have painted saffron mark on the Prince's forehead, but in doing so, he was not blessing him with any sovereignty. Even the affixing of Teeka or Qashka on the forehead of Khusro is a creation of the fancy of some cunning conspirator because, as it has been said earlier, it was never the custom of the Gurus to anoint anyone, Sikh or non-Sikh.

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Some scholars have concluded on the basis of Mohsan Fani's statement that the Guru was a political offender, his greatest offence being in complicity with Khusro in his revolt against his father. But a careful perusal of the statement of Mohsan Fani would clear the matter.

Mohsan Fani says that 'the Guru merely offered prayers for Khusro'. Prayers for what ? Certainly not for his sovereignty. He might have offered prayers for his safety, as the Prince was being hotly pursued by the Imperialists or it might have been for the spiritual elevation of the Prince. Had Guru meant to help the Prince, he could have adopted some other means including an appeal to his followers of Majha region of the Punjab to obstruct the march of the Imperial forces. As a matter of fact it was a casual meeting between the Guru and the Prince and the offering of prayer had no political motive implicit in itself.

Macauliffe writes that moved by the compassion, his friendly feelings towards Khusro who had visited him along with the Akbar a few times previonsly, and in token of his respect towards the late monarch whose grandson Khusro was, the Guru gave him five thousand rupees to defray his expenses to Kabul. The Guru's furnishing of help is understandable in view of his good relations with Akbar, but what were the motives of the Guru in helping the Prince has not been made clear by Macauliffe. We understand that the monetary help to the needy Prince did not smack of some conspiracy, rather symbolised in itself the high values for which the Guru was striving to get roots. Mehma Parkash's evidence is pertinent in this context. According to this source, 'the Guru took pity upon the prince in misery and provided him with food, obviously, from the Guru's Langar, or free kitchen open to all wayfarers.'[1]

From the above discussion, one thing emerges that the Guru's so-called participation in the rebellion was merely an ostensible pretext for his execution. The real causes lay in the reaction of the Muslim orthodox people to the Sikh faith and organisation which appeared to them as having all the potentialities of transforming itself into a movement suffused with distinct cultural and political ethos and which could not be ignored by Jahangir during the days of his yet uncertain political career. The reaction was represented by the revivalists headed by Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi who through his devoted disciple Murtza Khan and chief adviser of Jahangir in winning over the leading Muslim nobles to take his side in the contest for the throne worked upon the mind of Emperor Jahangir to

1. Sakhi No. 143, 1-4.

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follow the policy of religious intolerance towards the non-Muslims and particularly Guru Arjan Dev. The actual words of Shaikh Ahmed written with reference to Guru Arjan Dev in the course of his letter No. 193 in part III of vol. I of *Maktubat-i-Imam Rubbani* Hazrat Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani are as under :—

> "The execution of the accursed Kafir of Goindwal at this time is a very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus. With whatever intention they are killed and with whatever objective they are destroyed, it is a meritorious act for the Muslims. Before this Kafir was killed, I have seen in a dream that the Emperor of the day had destroyed the crown of the head of Shirk or infidelity. It is true that this infidel was the chief of the infidels and a leader of the Kafirs...The object of levying Jaziya on them is to humiliate and insult the Kafirs, and Jehad against them and hostility towards them are the necessities of the Muhammadan faith."

The Mujaddid uses still stronger language against the non-Muslims in another letter[1] wherein he urges upon Shaikh Farid Murtza Khan to humiliate and insult the Kafirs in every possible way, to keep them at a distance like dogs, and to destroy them wholesale, if possible.

This being the attitude of the revivalists, it is probable that, disappointed at the delay on the part of the Emperor to take any action of his own accord against Guru Arjan, the complaint against the Guru might as well have been made, directly or indirectly, by some agent of the Mujaddid or by Shaikh Farid Bukhari to implicate the Guru in the rebellion of Khusro to secure orders from the Emperor for his arrest and execution soon after the execution of Hussain Beg Badakhshi, Abdur Rahim and the other accomplices of Prince Khusru.

The reason of Mujaddid being particularly inimical towards Guru Arjan Dev are not far to seek. In the first instance, the Mujaddid regarded the popularity of Sikh faith and Guru Arjan Dev the danger to his own plans to islamize the whole of India, because the ever-increasing followers of the Sikh faith from among the Hindus and Muslims were evidently narrowing the field from where the Mujaddid himself had to raise his crop of converts. Secondly the invitation extended by

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1. Letter No. 163, Maktubat-i-Imam Rabbani Hazrat Mujjadid-i-Alf-i-Sani, Vol. III, pp. 50-53.

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Guru Arjan Dev to the Sufi saint Hazrat Mian Mir to lay the foundation-stone of the holy temple of the Sikhs whom he looked upon Kafirs, must have come as a great shock and added to his irritation against the Guru as well as the venerable saint of Lahore. No wonder, when the Guru Arjan was executed, he gloated over it as Bisiar Khub waqia 'an excellent event, a great achievement'.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MARTYRDOM

Great Turning point in the development of Sikhism

The martyrdom of Guru Arjan was an event of tremendous importance in the evolution of the Sikh movement and in the history of the Punjab. The execution of the Sikhs worked upon the minds of the Sikhs in such a way that they began to think that it was not possible for them to live unless they returned violence with violence and armed themselves to that end. The death of their beloved and innocent Guru taught them a lesson that without political freedom, it was difficult to obtain spiritual salvation. Trumpp is absolutely correct when he says that 'Guru Arjan's death is the great turning point in the development of Sikh community as from that time the struggle commenced that changed the entire character of the reformatory religious movement'. Guru Arjan himself had foretold the course which should be pursued by his successors. Guru Arjan, in his 'parting message' to his son said, "I have succeeded in my object. Go to my son, the holy Hargobind, and give him from me ample consolation. Bid him not to mourn or indulge in unmanly lamentations but sing God's praises. Let him sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability. Let him hold Bhai Budha in honour and in all respects. The news regarding the views of the Guru spread like wild-fire. The Sikhs found in them a message for bringing about revolution in their own attitudes and psyche as well as in those of the others around them. Guru Hargobind wore two swords; symbolising spiritual and secular powers respectively. According to Macauliffe, Guru Hargobind changed his character from a mere religious leader to the spiritual-cum-military leader. According to Khazan Singh "Guru Arjan's martyrdom inflamed the peaceful Sikh hearts. It set the ball rolling and started the spirit which later converted the ordinary hair cutters and water drawers into the greatest of soldiers and generals of the time."

Parting message

Ushered in a new era of Miri and Piri

"These last words of Arjan", says Archer, "began to pass through Indian Bazaars and along the pilgrim routes, and a change of mood prevailed among the Sikhs. In the greatest

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Garden some plough-shares were being beaten into swords and there were pruning hooks becoming spears". "A fellowship of reconciliation" says the same author, "thus assumed the martial form".

A fellowship of Reconciliation assumed the martial form

With the resolve of the Sikhs to take up arms in self defence it could not be ignored by the State particularly as the organisational strength of Sikhism and its unified leadership made it a magnet which might at any time become a rallying point of disaffection. In view of this, a struggle was becoming more or less inevitable and it openly broke out under Guru Arjan's own son and successor, Guru Hargobind.

Rallying point of Disaffection

Not only this, the seeds of disunity between the Hindus and the Muslims were sown; undoubtedly the Sikhs looked upon the matter in a totally different light and 'naturally enough' they ascribed the death of their beloved Guru, who was renowned for the saintliness of his character and to whom people had flocked from all quarters for spiritual solace and enlightenment, to the bigotry of the Government, which considered itself as the sole custodian of Islam. The Guru's death inflamed the religious passion of the Sikhs and it was at this time that the seeds of hatred for the Muslim power were sown which took such deep roots in the minds of the faithful followers of Nanak. In contradiction to it, the Muslims also ceased to take interest in the Sikh Movement. The advantages which this movement promised to accrue to the people were lost sight of by the parties with the result that the Muslims after 1606 came into the embrace of Sikhism only in an insignificant number.

Seed of disunity between The Sikhs and the Muslims

It vindicated the Guru's steadfastness, truthfulness and sincerity and the temerity for the cause. Naturally it strengthened the faith of the Sikhs in their Guru and his word. The Sikhs henceforward began to look upon the Guru as the 'Prince of Martyrs' and considered it an act of the highest merit to emulate his example.

Strengthened the faith of the Sikhs in their Guru

It benefited the Sikh Movement in another way. The Sikhs' faith in the ideals and institutions of the Guru increased, and the Sikh organisation received immense strength. Besides this, the followers of the Guru began to think that theirs was a superior fellowship which aroused jealousy in the minds of the Muslim State and Muslim Church.

Added respect for Sikh ideals and institutions

A STUDY IN THE PERSONALITY OF GURU ARJAN DEV

The fifth brilliant successor of Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan was a dynamic personality – social reformer, spiritual mentor of

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Cynosure of the people

high order, moral disciplinarian, organiser, a great literateur and a thoroughly conscious being devoted to the cause of truth on earth. Because of his accomplishments and his devotion to progressive cause, he grew to be the cynosure of the people and a force to be reckoned with. If the Bhatts, Brahmin scholars of Benaras were dazzled by the charm of Guru's personality and could not restrain themselves from versifying his greatness and sweetness of which he was the embodiment, the prejudiced and fanatic Jahangir also could not hide the lustre that the Guru's greatness in his actions and demeanour emitted in his writings. He looked splendid not only to the Punjabi poet and St. Paul of Sikhism, Bhai Gurdas, but even a non-Punjabi Abu-al-Fazal, one of the nine gems of Akbar's court could not help admiring him. The personality of the Guru attracts and dominates. He has left imprints on the sands of time which ages will not able to efface or erase. Distance of time has not been able to minimise the loftiness of his mission and his devotion to it—rather it has provided the right perpective to understand and appreciate him properly.

Bhatts and others—all praise him

Ideal house-holder

Guru Arjan Dev did not believe in other-worldliness. He lived in the world as people lived around him; but with a difference. His life was the life of an ideal house-holder. He was a dutiful son, a dutiful husband and a dutiful father. His obedience to his father was proverbial. He was sent to Lahore to attend the marriage of one of his relatives, but when he did not receive any reply from his father, he felt as if he were like a fish out of water, and his meeting with the father was, to him, 'the sealing up of the fate of Kal-yug.' He was always calm—even in the midst of strains and stresses, turmoil and tempests. He would not fume and fret even when seated on the hot plates beneath the fast falling red-hot sand of oven, or in a couldron of boiling water. He had admirers and despisers both. Whereas Bhai Budha and Bhai Gurdas showered praises on him, Sulhi Khan and Jahangir were his inveterate enemies. But neither the admirers could swell his head nor did his enemies waver him from his path. He always enjoyed the tranquillity of head and heart or equipoise of a true yogi. Harbans Bhatt says that the Guru was a placid river wherein the people took bath and enjoyed bliss. Mathura calls the Guru a great hero of the stature of Arjan of Mahabharat and praises his purity in the amidst of the impurities of the worldly life.

Man of rare equipoise

A great Apostle

Guru Arjan was a great apostle, never tired of his apostolic activities. He visited various places such as Khadur, Goindwal, and the villages of Bhaini and Khanpur, Khara etc. in the Majha region of the Punjab. Similarly he also undertook a tour of the Doaba tract. Though all the details in Sikh record regarding the Guru's tour are not believable, yet it is certain

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that the Guru achieved a remarkable success and gained a large number of converts. His fame spread even beyond the frontiers of the Punjab. Whosoever came into contact with him could not escape soul-elevating and soothing impact of his touch.

His Sikhs who were asked to acquaint the people with the Sikh Way also did their work with zeal and sincerity. Madho preached Sikhism in Kashmir. Laloo and Bhai Nihal also did their best to spread the faith of 'Nam'. Macauliffe mentions an anecdote to bring to light the profound effect of the Guru's teachings. Once a merchant was taking wheat from Bhatinda to some market in the hope that he would sell it at higher rate. On the way, having learnt fame of the Guru, he put up with the Guru and listened to his teachings. He was spell-bound. Lo! He was a changed man. Instead of striking a bargain of the wheat to earn profit he donated the whole of it to the 'Temple of Bread' i.e. to say Free Kitchen.

An ideal Preacher

The Guru was aware of the role which a preacher can play. Once the Guru was asked as to which ought to be the qualities of a preacher. The Guru replied "The preacher who practises what he says can certainly have his effect on the people. The soundness of teachings is often compared with the soundness of the character of a preacher and seriousness with which he himself practises those in life. Just as a tree is never strong if it has no roots, similarly the teachings can make no impression if the preacher does not abide by him".

Guru Arjan Dev believed that the division of mankind on the basis of caste, creed, clime, wealth and birth was not only socially bad but also a definite obstacle on the path to soul-growth. God can be named any way one likes. There are different names of God; but He is one. The study of Quran, Purans and other books can give you knowledge but cannot put you on the path of spiritual elevation. For spiritual ascent, it is necessary that one should follow moral and social laws and one should be imbued with the spirit of service.

Compiler and Editor

Guru Arjan was a great compiler and editor. The Guru's collection of the material and editing speaks of the highwater-mark of his persistent perseverance and ingenuity. It was no easy thing to procure material from Mohan and various organisations of different Bhaktas, but thanks to his devotion that he suceeeded in collecting requisite material. The selection was done not only on doctrinal basis but also on the lyrical and living value of the piece. The huge material is arranged according to 31 musical measures. The selection of Ragas (musical measures) was carefully

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made : those that aroused passion of any kind were omitted. Megh and Hindol were not used because of their jubilant tone. Jog and Deepak were likewise rejected for their melancholy. The Vars of Odes are constructed on a truly indigenous basis, Nine out of the 22 being set to the martial strains of the well-known heroic ballads. Within each rag or measure the passages are arranged according to subject. Single paragraphs always begin with an invocation to God. First come the writings of the Gurus in the order of their succession, each calling himself by the common appellation of Nanak; then follow those of the saints, beginning with Kabir and ending—if there is any piece from him—with Farid. Towards the end, after the Sloks of Kabir and Farid are given the Swayyias of eleven contemporary bards who admirably sum up the characteristics of the different Gurus. After a miscellany of Shloks left over from insertion in the Vars, the book closes with an epilogue, called Mundavani.

The Guru used freely his right as an editor. He rejected the compositions of many men like Kanha, Chhajju, Shah Hussain and Pilo who had requested him to find a place in his Grant because some of them had Vedantic leanings while others had hatred for the world and women. "He wanted only healthy optimism and joy in worldy duties and responsibilities and not mere tearful asceticism or other-worldliness".

Moreover, he made changes in the document prepared by Sahansar Rai. Several hymns contained in the document were ignored. In the same way, the last hymn of sarang which was given under the heading of 'Kabir Nama' was given in the Granth under the name of Nama. Many words also underwent changes at the hands of the Guru. A uniformity was brought about in the spellings of the words used in various compositions. The Guru took special care that coherence or the train of thought might be maintained under all circumstances.

Creative genius

Apart from the qualities stated above, he was endowed with rare qualities of a creative genius. He took upon himself the mighty task of putting the ideas of Nanak into practice. He rightly understood that it was essential to establish ideals and institutions to preserve the ideas as preached by Nanak and to lend dynamism to the society. He gave to his followers central place of worship in the form of Hari-Mandir, a Bible in Adi Granth, religious centre in Amritsar and organisation known as Masand system. The Sikhs became a compact community bound by the sacred thread of common faith, and possessed

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with required amount of dynamism. The martyrdom of the Guru proved to be the proverbial promethian fire out of which arose a community surcharged with a new spirit of daring and doing.

Confucious says, "The way of superior man is three-fold; virtuous, he is free from anxieties; wise, he is free from perplexities; bold, he is free from fear. The Guru apart from being wise and virtuous was bold and free from fear. Neither the superior arm of the emperor, Jahangir, nor could the machinations of his rivals strike fear into him. Under his stimulating leadership, the Sikhs had acquired an intensity of character which steeled them against all tyranny and corruption. After the work of organisation he had effected among the Sikhs, he says, "Now the order of the Merciful has gone forth that no one shall molest another". And the Sikhs had been sufficiently prepared to understand what that order meant for them. Birbal, as recorded by Macauliffe, asked the Guru to collect capitation tax; but the Guru refused to do so. He could not be cowed down even by the mighty Jahangir and he suffered execution smilingly and with unparalleled calmness.

ADI GRANTH

The next step which the Guru took to consolidate and extend Sikhism was the compilation and editing of Adi Granth. This step, in fact, has been acclaimed as the most important one. Dr. I. B. Bannerjee regards it 'the crowning achievement of the Guru'.[1]

Many factors impressed upon the Guru the necessity for taking this step. Sikhism is essentially a religion of the Name. In it the most obvious religious exercise was the recitation or singing of the Guru's words to the exclusion of all other ceremonies or rituals. Seeing the importance of this practice many clever persons had begun to mix up spurious writings with the true compositions of the Gurus. In 1594 when Guru Arjan returned from his religious tours of the Majha tract of the Punjab he discovered that Prithia had not been idle in forwarding his pretentions, and had begun to compile an anthology of sacred writings in which he was inserting compositions of his own. The Guru who was responsible for the organisation of Sikhism on a sound basis had to ensure unity of belief and practice. No wonder, he abandoned his other pursuits in order to make available to his followers an authentic compilation of the writings of the Gurus

1. I. B. Bannerjee : Evolution of the Khalsa I, p. 204.

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including himself and also those which were considered to be in consonance with the spirit of Sikhism.

Secondly, because of the ever-increasing number of the Sikhs, there was need to reduce the Sikh religion to consistency and hinder divergent tenets and rituals. That consummation, however, could only be attained, when the exact words of the Gurus were permanently recorded in one great volume.

Thirdly, Guru Amar Das had left definite instructions in the 23rd and 24th pauries of the Anand that the real hymns of the Guru alone should be repeated and reverenced by the Sikhs. Guru Amar Das writes :—

'Come, Ye disciples, beloved of the true Guru
Sing a true song.
Sing the song of the Guru, the song of songs,
Saith Nanak, ever sing this true song'.

* * *

'Without the true Guru every song is false. Every song is false without the true Guru. They who write it are false, they who hear it are false, and false is its author.'

Hence it was obligatory for Guru Arjan Dev to take precautions lest the Sikhs should recite writings other than those of the Gurus.

Fourthly, if the independence of the Sikh people was to be established, it was essential that they should have an independent source of religious inspiration. The Sikhs had been given a script and a language of their own and now there was a genuine need that they should have a separate religious book which should occupy in the regard of the Sikhs a position such as that of the Vedas, the Bible or the Quran.

Fifthly, as Gorden says, 'to raise their (Sikhs') status, to separate them from the mass of the Hindus and to unite them by one common religious tie, the Guru deemed it desirable to prepare a sacred code written in the mother tongue or in the language understandable to the people in general.

THE COLLECTION

Guru Arjan sent Bhai Gurdas to borrow genuine writing-of his predecessors from Baba Mohan for the purpose of cops ying them down. Gurdas went to his house, but Mohan being

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engrossed in meditation did not open the door and he had to return empty-handed. Bhai Budha was then asked to approach Baba Mohan. He knocked at the door of Mohan's house, but met no response. He lost his patience and broke open the door. He was astonished to find Baba Mohan in trance. On the advice of Baba Mohri, Mohan's brother, Bhai Budha desisted from disturbing Mohan and returned to the Guru's residence. The failure of the two emissaries had shown the Guru that a little diplomacy was needed, and after some initial difficulties he did at last succeeded in getting the object of his desire. Guru went to Baba Mohan's house personally and addressed Mohan with the following stanza :—

"O Mohan ! lofty is thy mansion and matchless thy palace.

O Mohan ! saints adorn the doors of thy temples. In the temple they ever sing the praises of the infinite and merciful God.

Where the company of the saints assemble, there they meditate on thee,

Show compassion and kindness, O Compassionate Lord; be merciful to the poor

Nanak representeth I am thristing for a sight of thee, grant it to me, and all happiness shall be mine."

(Gauri Chhant Mohalla 5, page 248, Guru Granth.)

At this Mohan softened, opened the door and handed over the required manuscripts to the Guru. In the ecstasy of his delight the Guru wrote :—

"I am wealthy and fortunate in the true name.

I sing God's praise with composure and love when I opened and saw my father and grandfather's treasury of sacred books.

My soul was enriched.

My store-houses were filled with gems and rubies.

Inestimable, inexhaustible and unweighable.

O my brethern, let us eat and spend this wealth together."

(Guru Moh. 5, page 158, Guru Granth.)

According to Prof. Sahib Singh the above stanza was adressed to God and not to Mohan. But this view does not seem to be correct. The reasons are not far too seek. Firstly it seems that the above mentioned stanza was addressed to both Mohan and God, the former being expanded and replaced by God and secondly there are other hymns available in the Holy Granth confirming that the Guru visited Mohan's house perso-

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nally and when he used the word 'Mohan', he meant the son of Amar Das and none else. The Guru further showered his blessings on Baba Mohan. For instance, in another stanza the Guru says :—

"O Mohan, incomparable are thy words and superior department.

O Mohan, thou believest in one God, all others thou treatest as refuse.

O Mohan, Mayest thou be successful with thy family, O Mohan, thy children, friends brethern and family all hast thou saved.

Thou hast also saved those who having beheld thee have despelled their pride.

Death never approacheth those who magnify thee.

Endless are thine excellences, they cannot be described O True Guru and Supreme God.

Nanak representeth, thou has preserved a just by clinging to which the world shall be saved."

To the hymns of the first three Gurus were added those of his father which were in Guru's possession and Guru Arjan's own compositions which were very numerous and formed by far the major portion of the entire collection. Besides this, he made selection from the compositions of various Bhagats or Saints, both Hindus and Mohammadans whose teachings agreed with those of the Sikh Gurus in their fundamentals and incorporated them in the Granth. A question may be asked as to how the Guru procured the compositions of the Bhaktas ? Sikh Sakhikars suggest that the Guru through his miraculous powers called the spirits of the dead saints and made them speak out their compositions. Obviously the view is absurd. As a matter of fact, the Guru had inherited from his predecessors the hymns of the Bhaktas such as Kabir and Farid to which he added the hymns of others which he obtained from the followers of their respective sects. A close study of the hymns of Guru Nanak and his successors would show that many expressions of the Bhaktas were found in the utterances of the Guru proving thereby that the predecessors of Guru Arjan Dev had before them the writings of these Bhaktas. The following expressions would amply illustrate the point :—

"Sutak will enter into out kitchen (Var Asa) is also found in Kabir's Gauri. 'The mind is born out of the five senses' occurring in Guru Nanak's Asa is the same as 'the mind is the creature of the five senses' of Kabir's Gauri. 'Live pure amidst the impurities' of the world is word for word the same in a

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Guru Nanak's Japji as well as in Kabir's Maru. 'Without the True Guru they shall not find the way' (Var Asa) also occurs in Kabir's Basant and Beni's Parbhati. Some couplets of Farid are embodied in the writings of Guru Nanak (e.g. 113 & 114). Sometimes the Guru criticises Farid's views and inserts his own Slokas after his (e.g. 119-120 & 123-124). See also Farid's Suhi (ii) and Guru Nanak's reply to it in the same measure Ghar 6 (ii)."

A similar identity or correspondence in expressions is found between second, third and fourth Guru's on the one hand and Farid & Kabir on the other.

Closely connected with all this is another problem which needs thorough probe and close attention. The compositions of various Bhaktas found in Adi-Granth and those preserved in other parts of the country are different from each other in respect of certain words, sentences and nuances. The reason is not difficult to find. By the time, they came to be known in the Punjab, they had undergone linguistic alterations in the process of transmission from the saints to their followers who were contemporaries of Guru Arjan.

Bhatts' composition

In addition to Bhakta's compositions, the Guru gave a place to the compositions of some bards who had accepted Sikh religion and offered the Guru penegyrics of himself and his predecessors. Sadd of Sunder, Var of Satta and Balwand were also selected to be embedded in the Granth.

The material thus collected was then written out by Bhai Gurdas at the dictation of Guru Arjan and after much arduos labour, the work was completed in A.D. 1604. The Granth Sahib, as it came to be called was placed on Har Mandir with Bhai Budha as the first Head Granthi or the incharge.

Rejected compositions

On hearing that Guru Arjan was compiling the Granth, Kanha, Chhaju, Shah Hussain and Piloo, the four famous religious saints of Lahore approached the Guru with the request that their compositions might be given a place in the sacred Granth. The Guru declined their offer because he did not find their compositions fit to be included in the Holy Book. Kanha delivered his composition as under :—

I am He, I am He
Whom the Veds & Purans sing, But whom none
hath found by search.

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The Guru regarded it as gross blasphemy and rejected it. Similarly the Guru rejected the compositions of Chhaju[1] because they were derogatory to the female sex and were depoid of integral approach to the problems of soul, mind and society. Shah Hussain's[2] compositions could not find favour of the Guru because they were otherworldly and were not in keeping with the spirit of Sikhism which enjoins upon his followers to live life in its fullness. Piloo's[3] compositions were also rejected on similar grounds.

The Adi Granth is an enormous volume consisting of nearly 6000 hymns. Its contributors are as under :—

Contributors

Sikh Gurus :—These include the first five Gurus. The largest number (2218) is from the pen of Guru Arjan Dev followed by Guru Nanak (974); Amar Das (907); Ram Das (679); and Angad (62). Afterwards, Guru Gobind Singh embedded in it 116 Shabads and 2 Shalokas of Guru Tegh Bahadur and only one line of his own, which, according to Trumpp and Munshi Sohan Lal formed a reply to his father's letter addressed to him from the prison at Delhi but which according to Dr. Chhabra, is something which is very doubtful.

Hindu Bhaktas and Muslim Sufis:—Hymns of sixteen Bhaktas and Sufis are included in the Granth. In the chronological order they are Jai Dev of Bengal; Farid of the Punjab; Nam Dev, Trilochan & Parmanand of Maharashtra; Sadhna of Sindh; Beni & Ramanand of Uttar Pradesh; Dhanna of Rajasthan; Pipa, Sain Kabir and Ravidas of Uttar Pradesh; Bhikhan of Uttar Pradesh; and Sur Das, the blind poet of Avadh. The greatest number of hymns from amongst Bhaktas are those of the Muslim writer of Benaras, Kabir, and Farid who was the Sufi mystic of Pak Pattan. "The hymns of Bhaktas and Sufis in the Granth Sahib represent four centuries of religious thought in India".

Minstrels (Bhatts or Bards) :—There were eleven bards (Bhats) in the court of Guru Arjan. They were all Brahmans and came to Guru Arjan in 1580-81. They were men of wisdom and were much impressed by the personality and the work

Bal

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1. "Look thou not on woman, even though she be cut out of paper;
Like a plundering hand of Baloche's she will take thee away and kill thee."

2. Be silent, O my friend, be silent;
there is no necessity, O my friend, for speaking;
My friend, there is no necessity for speaking.

3. They who have died at their birth are superior to us; they do not thrust their feet into the mere, and are not befauled therewith.

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of Guru Arjan Dev. They sang in Swayyas, the praise of Guru Arjan Dev and other Gurus. Their names were: Kal, Jalap, Bhikha, Sal, Bhal, Nal, Bal, Gyand, Mathura, Kirat, and Harbans.[1]

Other Contributors

The Granth includes the eulogistic Ballad (Var) of Satta and Balwand. The composition of the Balad was started by Balwand and completed by Satta. Sunder's elegy popularly known as Ramkali Sad also found a place in the Holy Granth. Mardana, the Muslim companion and disciple of Guru Nanak also contributed five Shabads to the Granth.

ARRANGEMENT

1. The Granth starts with 'Jap', called also Guru Mantar. It occupies about 9 pages and consists of 40 Sloks, called Pauries of irregular length, some of two and some of several lines. The mode of composition implies the presence of a questionnaire and an answer. It was written by Nanak and it very beautifully and artistically depicts the road one should adopt to attain oneself to the Reality. The Sikhs regard it a sacred duty to repeat it every morning.

2. 'Jap' is followed by 'Sodar Reh Ras', another composition of Guru Nanak, although later on additions to it were made by Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan Dev. 'Sodar' is the evening prayer of the Sikhs. This composition depicts the yearning of the soul for the door of the house of God.

3. After 'Sodar', there is a composition known as 'So Purkh', whose English synonym is 'that Supreme Being'. It is also recited as a part of evening prayer. 'Kirtan Sohila' follows 'Sodar'. It occupies a page and one or two lines. It was also composed by Guru Nanak but has additions by Guru Ram Das and Arjan Dev. The word 'Kirtan' is a perverted from the word Kirti which means to praise and Sohila stands for marriage song, a song of rejoicing. Hence 'Kirtan Sohila' is a song of rejoicing in praise of God.

4. The next portion of the Granth is divided into thirty one sections each according to a particular Raga. The portion occupies 1154 pages. The thirty one Ragas are as under :—
(1) Sri Rag; (2) Majh; (3) Gauri; (4) Asa; (5) Gujri; (6) Dev Gandhari; (7) Bihagra; (8) Wadhans (Wad Hans); (9) Sorath; (10) Dhanasri; (11) Jaitsri; (12) Todi; (13) Bairari; (14) Tiang; (15) Suhi; (16) Bilawal; (17) Gaund; (18) Ram Kali; (19) Nat Narayan; (20) Mali Gaura; (21) Maru; (22) Tukhari; (23) Kedara; (24) Bhairon; (25) Basant; (26) Sarang; (27) Malhar; (28) Kanahra; (29) Kalian; (30) Parbhati; and (31) Jai Jai Wanti.

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3. According to Cunningham, the number of Bhats was nine. Dr. Chhabra eounts them fifteen.

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The Gurus considered divine worship through music the best means of attaining that state of Bliss—Vismad—which resulted in communion with God. The selecting of ragas was carefully made. Those that aroused passions of any kind were omitted. Megh and Hindol were not used because of their jubilant tone; Jog and Deepak were likewise rejected for their melancholy.

Each of these sections begins with an invocation to God followed by the hymns of the Gurus in order of their succession. All the Gurus themselves used the common appellation of Nanak. Their compositions can be known only by the word in the beginning such as Mehla 1, Mehla 2, Mehla 3 & so on. After Guru's hymns in each section are the hymns of the Bhaktas or the saints beginning with Kabir and ending with Farid, if there is any hymn from the latter.

5. Towards the end, after the slokas of Kabir and Farid are given Swayyas of contemporary Bards (Bhatts), who admirably sum up the characteristics of the different Gurus. After a miscellany of sloks left over from insertions in Vars, the book closes with an epilogue called 'Mundawni', in which the author says:—

'In this disc are placed three things;
Truth, Harmony and Wisom;
These are seasoned with the name of God
Which is the ground of all;
Whoever eats and enjoys he will be saved.'

And then he adds with a genuine pride in the work he accomplished for the regeneration and rejuvenation of mankind :—

It is a thing you cannot offord to ignore;
You must clasp it to your hearts.

The Granth concludes with the Rag Mala which contained a list of ragas and their sub-divisions.

On conducting a probe it appears that 'Rag Mala' does not form an essential part of the Granth. There are many reasons for that. Firstly it forms a part of the work of a Mohammadan poet, Alam which is supposed to have been written in 1583 and purports to be an account of the love affair of Madhava, Nal and a lady called Kam Kundala. Secondly the ragas mentioned in Rag Mala do not correspond to those used in Adi Granth.

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LANGUAGE

The language of the Granth is a mixture of almost all the Aryan languages current in India. There are some stanzas whose language is very much like Sanskrit e.g. the contributions of Jai Dev, the famous author of Gita Gobinda. One or two stanzas are in pure Persian. The contribution of Nam Dev and Trilochan bear a strong impress of Marathi on them. Even then despite a span of five centuries between the earliest and latest compositions and the distant regions from which they were gathered, there is a certain unity of theme and language in them. "Guru Arjan chose only those hymns who echoed sentiments he wanted to inculcate in his own community. He did not have much difficulty with the language since most saint-poets of Northern India wrote in Sant Bhasha, which was a sort of esperanto vocabulary common to Northern Indian languages and used extensively for religious verse."[1] Besides this, as already stated whether the poems were from Bengal, Uttar Pradesh or Maharashtra, the version which the Guru accepted was that which the Punjabis could understand. The main appeal of the Granth as a scripture is its non-esoteric character and its utter simplicity. It has some of the greatest writings in the Punjabi language. Its two chief contributors Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan Dev have been inspiration of many later poets.

IMPORTANCE OF ADI GRANTH

Communal Consciousness

The compilation of the Granth is a great landmark in the Sikh History. More than anything else it created communal consciousness among the Sikhs and with a separate book of their own, they finally parted company with their Hindu brethren who would not regard any other book except the Vedas, Upanishads and the Puranas as holy. Sociologically speaking, it contributed immensely to the emergence of the Sikhs as a separate religion with distinct ethos of its own.

A Book of Synthesis

The Adi Granth is the first religious book which contains the writings of the persons belonging to different communities, castes and diverse regions of the country. Of the 16 Bhaktas, four (Nam Dev, Sadan, Sain and Ravi Das) are Shudras and two (Kabir & Farid) were Muslims, four were Brahmans (Jai Dev, Trilochan, Sur Das, and Ramanand), one Jat (Dhanna); two Bhikhan and Beni of unknown Caste and one Pipa a barbar. While the book was in preparation, the enemies of the Guru represented to Akbar that he was compiling a book in which the Muslims and Hindu prophets were reviled. The Emperor visited Goindwal in 1598 and heard some of the passages read out to him for it. He found nothing objectionable—rather he expre-

Verify

1. Khushwant Singh : A History of the Sikhs, Vol. I, p. 308.

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ssed that the Granth was 'the greatest book of synthesis worthy of reverence'. T.L. Vasavani regards it the first great scripture of synthesis.

Having compiled the Granth, the Guru placed it in Hari Mandir and instituted daily public worship at the temple where the Granth was recited all day long to the accompaniment of stringed muscial instruments. This step of the Guru supplanted the Hindu Vedas and Puranas which the people were unable to read; and went a long way in developing a community with a distinct faith. The Granth was a sort of Bible for the Sikhs.

Treasure of Languages

The Granth is a 'Treasure of Indian Languages'. Contributions of Kabir and Ramanand are in pure Hindi of the land. Farid's compositions are in pure Punjabi. The hymns of Trilochan and Nam Dev bear impress of Marathi. Persian words are also available in Granth. We have in it words of Sindhi such as 'Marar' and 'Jumnagar' and those of Lehndi such as 'Wanjan', 'Ghin' etc. Besides this, the Granth throws considerable light on the syntax words and also the development of different Indian languages during a span of five centuries between the earliest and the latest compositions.

Repository of Religious thought

The hymns of the Bhaktas and Sufis in the Granth Sahib represent four centuries of Indian religious thought. They do not, however, correspond strictly to the versions now current in Hindi, Marathi or the other languages in which they are said to have been originally written. Apparently by the time, they came to be known in the Punjab, they had undergone certain linguistic alterations; but once they had been incorporated in the Granth, no further changes were introduced in the text.

Mirror of contemporary condition

The Adi Granth of Guru Arjan Dev is nowhere narrative or historical, yet it furnishes valuable information regarding social, religious, economic and political life of the age. Guru Nanak in 'Asa Di Var' and 'Babar Vani' gives us a clear picture of the political and social corruption rampant in the society. He also gives a graphic description of the destruction and devastation wrought by Babar's invasion, apart from his admonitions to the selfish, careless, lethargy-ridden and foolish rulers of the country. The Guru's hymns make no secret of the fact that social life was not harmonious. The people were caste-ridden and superstition-stricken with no spirit left to proceed onwards. Religious life was also at its lowest ebb. The people were more particular for the performance of useless and unmeaning ceremonies than understanding the true meaning of their religions.

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Similarly by reading the Granth one can have a peep into the economic life of the people.

An original priceless spiritual treasure

Dr. Chhabra says, "Importance of the Granth lies in the fact that whereas we learn of the philosophy of Socrates only from Plato and Xenopher; of the philosophy of Christ from Mathew and John; where Budha and Confucious have left no original record of their teachings; the philosophy of the Sikh Gurus is preserved in such secure and original form, and under the locks of poetical metres that it is well-nigh impossible to adulterate or deform it".

According to Cunningham 'The Guru gave to his followers their fixed rule of religious and moral conduct with an assurance that multitudes even of divine Brahmins had wearied themselves with reading the Vedas and had found not the value of an oil-seed within them'.

Fund of mythological references

The Granth contains numerous references pertaining to old mythology. Vishnu, Maya, Lakshmi, Rama, Ravana, Shiva, Brahma, Parbati, etc. have been alluded to in various compositions of the Granth.

Thus the Granth is a unique historical document. It is, perhaps, the only kind of writing of a scriptural nature which has preserved without embelishment or misconstruction the original writings of religious leaders. It has saved the literary works of other poets of the time from the vagaries of human memory. The Granth is the central object of Sikh worship and ritual. In all temples copies of the Granth are placed under a canopy. The book itself is wrapped in cloth—usually richly embroidered. Despite all this, the Granth Sahib is not like the Idol in a Hindu temple or the Cross in a Catholic Church. It is the source and not the object of prayer or worship. Sikhs revere it because it contains the teachings and words of their Gurus. It is more a book of divine wisdom than the word of God.

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Religion in Revolt

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Chapter 10

GURU HARGOBIND

(b. 1595, d. 1644)

Prithia's conspiracies

Guru Hargobind was born to Guru Arjan Dev in A.D. 1595 at Vadali, a village near Amritsar. His birth caused a lot of heart-burning on the part of Prithia who intensely desired that Guru Arjan Dev shoueld die issueless and his Gaddi be inherited by his son, Manohar Das Meharban. Unfavoured by God, he began to test his own ill nature to succeed in his object. He would hatch conspiracies to put an end to the life of child Hargobind; but all his designs met with utter failure.

Education

As Hargobind came of age, he was put under the charge of Bhai Budha to be trained in swordsmanship, riding and handling of various military weapons. Besides this, he studied astrology, medicines, scriptures and books on polity. According to the Sikh tradition, the Guru grew to be an adept in military tactics and acquired a deep knowledge of the aforesaid subjects.

Extremely handsome

Guru Hargobind was extremely handsome, his feet resembling the pink lotus, his nails shedding lustre like the diamonds arrayed in line. Both his legs were straight and muscular like the plant of '*supari*' and the joints of ankle and knees were stout and broad. He possessed broad chest and strong shoulders. The fingers of his both hands were like the luminous stone, whilst his face was as lustrous as moon. The milk-white teeth, pouting lips and eyes as sharp as the edges of the petal of the lotus, were adding to his beauty.[1] Bhai Gurdas says beautifully about the Guru, "The Guru was a mighty hero, a great benefactor and a powerful enemy-smasher".[2]

Children

Guru Hargobind effected three marriages and had five sons and one daughter. Out of the five sons, the four, Baba Gurditta, Suraj Mal, Ani Rai, Atal Rai—passed away during the life-time of the Guru and his fifth son Guru Tegh Bahadur became Guru in A.D. 1664.

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1. Refer to Suraj Parkash by Bhai Santokh Singh.
2. dal bhanjan Gurū sūrma, wad jodha bahu par upkārī.

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He married his daughter Bibi Viro with Sadhu, son of Dharma in A.D. 1629. She begot five sons—Gulab Chand, Jit Mal, Gangu Ram, Shah Sahgoo and Hari Chand who were all very bold and skilled warriors. They, under the guidance of Guru Gobind Singh, played their part well in the battle of Bhangani.

In A.D. 1606, when the Governor of the Punjab, Murtaza Khan, sent a massage to Guru Arjan Dev to come to Lahore and explain his position vis-a-vis-Khusro to Jahangir, he, before departing for Lahore, nominated Guru Hargobind as his successor. But the custom of investing Guruship on Hargobind was performed a little after the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. As usual, Bhai Budha did the job. Bhai Budha placed before Hargobind a *seli*, a woollen cord worn as a necklace or twisted round the head by the former Gurus and a turban as appurtenances of his calling. Guru Hargobind ordered that the *seli* should be placed in the treasury apparently because it was not suited to the altered condition of the Sikhs. He then addressed Bhai Budha "My endeavour shall be to fulfil thy prophecy. My *seli* shall be a sword-belt and I shall wear my turban with a royal aigrette."

NEW POLICY

Circumstances

The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev led the Sikhs to ponder upon the question: Was it right to knuckle under the evil instead of combating it ? Masands, who had gone corrupt and selfish pleaded inadvisability to adopt the latter course because it would involve the Sikhs in a war against the Mughals. Many people were simply stunned at the sudden change of circumstances and were in utter confusion. Mother Ganga, really bold and sensible lady, although opposed to the views of Masands, felt totally confused. Bhai Budha and other prominent Sikhs of the times also were not clear as to the course to be adopted at that juncture.

Under such circumstances, definite guidelines were the need of the hour because a little laxity or mistake could entail incalculable harm. Psychologically, the moment was crucial "Danger there was that the Sikhs might feel exasperated and revert to escapism and asceticism thus abjuring faith in Guru's philosophy of energising the people to fight for truth and righteousness." It was feared that the Sikhs might become inactive and start believing in, "let things move on as they are. What fun to take part in the humdrum of life." The struggle between virtue and evil as old as the world itself and it is always good not to take either side.

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Moreover, there were people who were gasping at taking revenge at Guru's execution. They were also to be taken cognizance of, before framing and ushering in a new policy. The traditional dislike of passivity on the part of the Jats who had entered the fold of Sikhism in a large number and the adventurous spirit of the nascent mercantile class must also be given due attention while framing any programme. The interests of the hitherto neglected classes and social groups namely the so-called sudras who had come into the embrace of Sikhism in quite a large number would have also to be taken care of. Dialectically, the interests of the plebeians (peasantry and the sudras) ran counter to those of the mercantile class whose natural tendency was to be capitalists and to establish capitalism. The over-bearing Jagirdari system of the Mughal Administration did not allow this inherent contradiction to sharpen itself and in the face of the mightier enemy, that is to say, jagirdari system, the likely conflict did not appear at the surface. Guru Hargobind kept all these in view and framed the policy which catered to all interests. According to this, the Sikhs were enjoined upon to combat the evil and not to knuckle under it. In Guru's views the meaning of the evil was quite comprehensive; it meant economic, social, political and religious exploitation. Since in the context of the situation the political evil was more pronounced and more quick in its effect, it was but natural that the refrain of the policy should be to fight vigorously against the Mughal Emperors; but at the same time, it enjoined upon the Sikhs not to neglect the spiritual-cultural side. Lest the Sikhs should divorce the spiritual matters from the mundane affairs, the Guru set the norm of being saint-soldier for every Sikh.

Evidently the policy suited all interests. In it the Jats found the scope for their energies to have full-play, the mercantile class the fulfilment of their latent desire to see the decline, and fall of the jagirdari based Mughal administration, and the masses the hope of the dawn of an era wherein they might attain some dignified social status. This policy also secured the position of the Gurus. Since the policy touched bigger issues, the small issues raised by Guru's opponents could not gather strength. The schismatic move of the Minas which revolved round, more or less, personal factor instead of doctrinal one, automatically thinned and ultimately vanished into insignificance.

Miri & Piri

The decision to adopt a new course necessitated that the Guru should symbolise the change in his own person and make necessary alterations in the ideals and institutions. The decision to adopt a new course (which was not exactly a new one) necessitated some alterations in the prevalent customs and

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institutions. According to the usual customs, Bhai Budha brought a *seli* (a woollen cord worn as a necklace by the former Gurus) and a turban and offered them to new Guru to wear them. But Hargobind ordered that the *seli* should be placed in the treasury, to demonstrate that it was not suited to the altered political condition of the Sikhs. He then addressed Bhai Budha 'My seli shall be a sword belt, and I shell wear my turban with a royal aigrette.'[1] He wore two swords: one symbolising 'Piri'—spiritual role and the other signifying 'Miri'—the secular life.

He told his disciples that in future in Guru's house "religion and worldly enjoyment shall be combined the cauldron to supply the poor and the needy, and the scimitar to smite the oppressores"[2] No wonder, the Guru dressed himself in a martial style and asked his Sikhs to bear arms to defend their lives, honour and rights. No doubt Guru's primary duty was to help the Sikhs to save themselves from the labyrinth of worldly temptations but at the same time, it was obligatory for the Guru to devise ways and means to make the Sikhs physically fit and sound. As a matter of fact, the Guru set before his followers the ideal (which was as old as Sikhism) with added force that they should have an all-round development—development of body as well as soul.

Arms & Horses as Offerings

The Guru issued an encyclical letter to the masands to the effect that he would feel extremely happy if the Sikhs brought offerings of arms and horses instead of money.[3] Besides this, many wrestlers and warriors, hearing of the Guru's 'New policy', came to the Guru for service. He enrolled as his bodyguard, fifty two heroes, who burned for the fray. This formed the nucleus of his future army and soon after, the number of recruits began to increase. Five hundred youths came from Majha, Doaba and Malwa regions of the Punjab.

These 500 youths told the Guru that they had no offerings to make him but their lives. So far as their pay was concerned they only required instruction in his religion and merely two meals a day. They professed that would be highly pleased to die in his service. The Guru gave them each a horse and weapons of war and gladly enlisted them in his army. He made Bidi Chand, Pirana, Jetha, Paira and Langha, each a

1. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, Vol. IV, p. 2.
2. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, Vol. IV, p. 4.
3. *Ibid*, p. 3.

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Captain of a troop of one hundered horses.[1] The exact strength of the army of the Guru is not known. Mohsan Fani states 'The Guru had seven hundred cavaliers and sixty artillery men were always in the service'.[2] This force as Cunningham suggests[3], possibly served as the Guru's body-guard and secured the safety of his person. Besides, the Guru is said to have enlisted many malcontents and fugitives among his followers and to have taken many dacoits and freebooters into his service. This seems to be confirmed by Mohsan Fani's statement that whoever was a fugitive from his home took refuge with him. In addition to all this, there were bands of Pathan mercenaries, and a Pathan chief named Painda Khan became one of his most able and trusted adherents. The army was committed to the cause of combating the evil in whatever form that might be. Since the Guru's cause was progressive and in consonance with the ethos of the Sikh movement, his followers extended to him their whole-hearted co-operation. The Guru's kitchen never ran short of provisions.[4]

Character of the Army

Some scholars have criticised the Guru on the ground that the Guru recruited in his army the worst type of criminals and highway men and confirmed plunderers[5]. A careful study of the Guru's soldiers and their subsequent achievements would help us a lot to appreciate the true character of the people. The soldiers of the Guru were devoted to the cause and were clear in their minds that their devotion to the Guru might cost them their heads. Moreover, the scholars ignored the effect of the Guru's Word on the people; it transformed them into the militia to remain in the vanguard to strike the satanic forces. Bidhi Chand, who was a noted dacoit was transmuted by the alchemy of the Guru's words into a beau ideal of a saint soldier. No act of dacoity, he committed after entering into the service of the Guru.

The Pathans did come with mercenary motives, but that was quite well-known. Moreover, the Guru had recruited them with specific purpose of getting his followers trained in the art of warfare. The Guru did not find any difficulty in providing meals to his soldiers. The provisions flowed into the Guru's kitchen in abundance and never any shortage of anything was

1. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, Vol. iv., p. 4.
2. Nanak Panthis : The Punjab—Past & Present, Vol. I, Part I, April 1967, p. 65.
3. Cunningham : History of the Sikhs, p. 56
4. Macauliffe : Sikh Religion, Vol. iv, pp. 52, 76.
5. Trumpp. *Adi Granth*, p. ixxxix.

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experienced by him. Some people, however, were sceptical with regard to the success of the Guru in maintaining such an army, but the Guru's hopefulness and force of character removed their fear after some time.

Fortification of Amritsar

Apart from the raising of the army to combat the evil forces, he constructed a wall around the city of Amritsar. A fort named Lohgarh was also built in the city. These were the times when fort occupied a place of great importance in war strategy and the Marathas called it 'mother'. No wonder the fort imparted to them a new confidence, besides symbolising in itself the determination of the Sikhs to pursue their ideals fearlessly. The Guru collected arms and made requisite arrangements for his followers to receive military training. The Government, however, was much perturbed.

Akal Takht

As has been mentioned above, the Guru assumed secular as well as spiritual leadership of the community and the logical concomitant of this step was to give two centres to guide the Sikhs in religious and temporal matters. For the religious purposes the Sikhs had Hari Mandir as their central sanctuary, and to provide instruction in temporal affairs the Guru constructed Akal Takht, also known as Akal Bunga (Timeless Throne) just in front of Hari Mandir in A.D. 1609.[1] At this place, the Guru began to convene assemblies to preach his Gospel. He said that as long as he continued in Hari Mandir, he should be reckoned as a saint and in Akal Bunga he should be looked upon as a king. He dressed himself in costly and princely attire and issued an edict to the Sikhs to present him with arms on their usual visits of pilgrimage. The Guru built Akal Takht a few yards in front of Hari Mandir with this view that a Sikh at Akal Bunga should not forget that spiritual elevation was as essential as his social obligations. As a matter of fact, the Guru wanted his followers to be 'saints-soldiers' extremely cultured, highly moral, ever-ready to measure swords with demonic forces.

Akal Takht was built of solid-brick-work, and so that it might look like a throne, it was built on a raised platform nearly ten feet in height. Here besides praying and preaching, talks were held on questions affecting the welfare of the community. It was while sitting on this throne that Guru would watch the wrestling

1. The construction was started in 1606 (fifth day of the light half of Har-BBK 1663) and completed in 1609.

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bouts and military feats of his disciples performed in the open space opposite the Akal Takht. As all the intricate cases and disputes were finally decided here by the Guru, the Akal Takht served the purpose of a Supreme Court for the Sikhs. Besides the throne, the Guru adopted all other emblems of royalty—the umbrella, the swords, the crest and the hawk and no wonder, the Sikhs called him a True King or 'Sachcha Padshah'—a king to all appearances, but in deeds and in purity as holy and great as any of his predecessors.

Since the Guru began to take interest in the secular affairs of the people, they instead of looking towards Delhi or Lahore, began to look towards Amritsar and the Guru.

The development of this habit contributed a lot towards the consolidation of the Sikh Movement.

Akal Takht, as the time rolled on, grew into an institution which symbolises in itself the idea that the use of sword for the protection of righteousness and for self-defence was not wrong. Moreover, the Sikhs developed a habit of looking towards 'Akal Takht, to seek guidance in secular matters with the result that there developed the tendency to be uniform in secular affairs as well. This thing itself was really significant because the decision once taken at Akal Takht was followed by the Sikhs enthusiastically and that was the reason that they were always able to overcome the peril, howsoever great it might be.

Daily Routine

The major changes in the policy and programme of the Guru naturally caused some changes in the day to day routine of the Guru. Guru Hargobind was the first Guru who systematically turned his attention to the chase. He rose before day, bathed, dressed himself in full armour, and then went to Hari Mandir—God's temple—to worship. There he heard Japji and Asa-di-Var recited. After giving sermons and offering concluding prayer, breakfast was distributed indiscriminately to the Guru's troops and followers as they sat in rows for the purpose. Having taken rest for an hour, the Guru prepared for the chase. Accompanied by an army of forest beaters, hounds, tameleopards, and hawks of every variety, he used to sally forth and traverse long distances. Contrary to the practice of the preceding Gurus, he withdrew all prohibitions on diet including animal food. All this he did to infuse new spirit among the people.

Under Guru's direction the music was employed to energise the spirit of the people. 'Dhadd', a special instrument to sing

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martial tunes, was said to have been invented by the Guru himself. All the Dhadd-players were asked to sing 'Vars' a special form of Epic poetry whose unfailing effect is the raising of the drooping spirit of the people. Abdul and Natha Mal were the chief Dhadd-players of the Guru's Court. Asa-di-Var began to be sung two times every morning—first by the rebeck players inside the Hari Mandir and then by the *Dhadis* at the Akal Takht. The martial songs went a long way to inspire the Sikhs with love and heroic deeds and dispel feelings unworthy of warriors. He also introduced the practice of choirs circumambulating the Golden Temple in the night with the blare of trumpets and flare of torches and singing of hymns in stirring tunes.

A Critique of 'New Policy'

The Guru's innovations caused great misgivings not only among the people but also among a number of Sikhs of the old school of thought. It is said that some of the Sikhs went to Mata Ganga, the Guru's mother and appealed to her to use her good offices to prevail upon the Guru that he should desist from following the wrong path, he had adopted or else the Guru would incur the displeasure of the Mughals and invite trouble. Although Mata Ganga replied that they should have no anxiety and tried to keep up couragious face, she remonstrated with the young Guru and told him to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Similar representations were made to Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Budha to the effect that they should put pressure on the Guru so that he might not follow the new policy. As a matter of fact, the Guru, immediately after assumption of the guruship, began to live away from Amritsar and the Sikhs records often speak of the anxiety and concern that the Guru's people felt for him. Indeed, there is evidence to show that the Guru had been leading, more or less, a wandering life and this, together with his other innovations, led to a good deal of misunderstanding.

Bhai Gurdas reactions to the inability of the Sikhs to appreciate Guru's policy in right perspective are contained in the following verses:—

People say the former Gurus used to sit in the Temple;
The present Guru remaineth not in place.

The former Emperors used to visit the former Gurus;
The present Guru was sent into the fortress by the Emperor.

In former times the Guru's Darbar could not contain the sect;
The present Guru leadeth a roving life and feareth nobody.

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The former Guru, sitting on their thrones, used to console the Sikhs; the present Guru keepeth dogs and hunteth.

The former Gurus used to compose hymns, listen to them and sing them; the present Guru composeth not hymns, not listeneth to them.

He keeps not his Sikh followers with him, but taketh enemies of faith and wicked persons as his guides. I say the truth within him cannot possibly be concealed; the Sikhs, like the bummle bees, are eneamoured of his lotus feet. He supperteth a burden intolerable to others and asserteth not himself.[1]

From this it is clear that the Guru's new mode of life was not well understood even by the Sikhs of the Old School; but that his actions were not always appreciated by his contemporaries are also shown by two anecdotes about Partab Mal narrated by Mohsan Fani. There can thus be little doubt that Sikhism was undergoing transformation in the hands of Guru Hargobind and that it was causing apprehensions all around. However the Sikhs' faith in their Guru and his policies did not suffer in any way, and as it has been said above, they like bummle bees were eneamoured of his lotus feet.

Bhai Gurdas, in order to justify the Guru's change in the policy under peculiar circumstances writes in thirty fourth var, Pauri 13:—

Just as one has to tie pail's neck while taking out water.
Just as to get 'Mani' snake is to be killed.
Just as to get Kasturi from deer's neck, deer is to be killed.
Just as to get oil, oil seeds are to be crushed.
To get kernel, pomgranate is to be broken.
Similarly to correct senseless people, sword has to be taken up."[2]

Some modern critics have not done full justice to Guru Hargobind while assessing the new policy inaugurated by him. They think that "lure of politics and glamour of arms led him

1. War XXVI of Bhai Gurdas.

2. Again Bhai Gurdas refers to the Guru saying "Man is top creation of God, superior to animals and others; but he is no better than them. An animal does not beg from other animals. Similarly the birds never indulge in flattery of one another. Man who is endowed with superior mind, intellect, power to think and feel and discriminate acts no better. He has selected a king to rule over himself and has made his life a hell.

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away from the true path of a religious and spiritual leaders." The judgement is altogether unfounded for two reasons; firstly there was no political motive of Guru Hargobind and secondly he did not swerve the path of spirituality. His daily routine was to listen to 'Asa-di-Var' early in the morning and then to give religious instruction to his followers. Moreover, he took keen interest so far as the propagation of his religion was concerned. He appointed preachers in various regions of the country; he himself went on tours to various places in the Doaba and Malwa regions of the Punjab. All these activities go to prove beyond doubt that he did not cease to be the religious leader. Besides this, the policy of the Guru symbolised in itself the response to the challenge of times. There were many solid reasons which led to its formulation; Firstly the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev and his own imprisonment had convinced the Guru that hard days were ahead, and, as a consequence of it, he made changes in the traditional policy to meet the challenge; Secondly, the jats by the time of Guru Hargobind formed by far the most preponderant element in the Sikh community and with their accession in increasing numbers to Sikh faith, new forces were bound to be released. Since they were bold, aggressive, and impatient, this thing was bound to affect the thinking of the Guru.

I. B. Bannerjee says: "Both externally and internally, the situation was changing and the policy of the Guru had perforce to be adjusted to the new environment. The organisational development of Sikhism had mostly taken place during the tolerant days of Akbar who had, on the contrary, even helped the Gurus in various ways. But the execution of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind's imprisonment definitely showed that sterner days were ahead and that the old policy of the mere peaceful organisation no longer sufficed.. Guru Arjan had foreseen and Guru Hargobind also clearly saw that it would no longer be possible to protect the Sikh community and its organisation without the aid of arms; and the way in which he proceeded to achieve this end speaks a good deal for his sagacity and his shrewd political sense."[1]

As a matter of fact, the change in the policy was the only course left for the Guru. But for it, the community of pious house-holders would have either not survived or at the most relapsed into the limited merit or utility of monk and mendicants.

Toynbee's Misconception

Toynbee, a world famous historian, remarks "Sikhism fell from its religious height in a political trough, because the Sikh

1. I. B. Bannerjee : Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. II, p. 32.

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Gurus, Hargobind Singh...succumbed to the temptation to use force." And further he comments that "this downfall of Sikhism was used by a clever militant Hindu reaction against the Moghul Empire as its instrument." Toynbee's assessment is contrary to real facts. The Sikh Guru did not succumb to the temptation to use force but regarded it legitimate to use force as the last resort to protect righteousness. Guru Nanak says, "it is the privilege and right of the true man to fight for righteousness." Guru Arjan also in his speech at Akal Takht on the eve of his departure to Lahore expressed similar views. By doing this, they did not fall from religious heights; nor did they fall in political trough. The Guru, even in the thick of battles remained in tune with the Reality and this was the reason that he did everything to protect the righteousness—even he made use of the force. And certainly there was no harm to use it as a last resort, and that too for smashing the tyrants. To use violent method to combat the evil is certainly not falling from religious heights, rather it affirms one's faith in virtuous cause. And which political trough, the Guru fell. Toynbee is mum on this point. Certainly, the Sikh Gurus paid less attention to the propagation of Sikhism owing to political tyranny they had to undergo; but religion did not suffer any way; although Sikh religious group did not swell itself.

So far as the view that the downfall of Sikhism was used by a clever militant Hindu reaction against the Moghul Empire as its instrument, is concerned, that is also far from truth. Sikh religion had its own purpose, it represented the best found in semitic religions as well as Aryan religions, plus something new. It is wrong to observe that the downfall of Sikhism was made use of by the militant Hindu reaction for the furtherance of their vested interests. As a matter of fact, the transformation that took place among the Sikhs was not a degeneration but culmination of the ideals set forth by the founder of the religion. There is no denying the fact that the Sikhs embraced and espoused the cause of the Hindus, not because they were the Hindus but because they were victimised and persecuted. And to take cudgels against injustice and tyranny was the core of the message of Sikhism and this certainly provided rallying point for the diverse elements of India to integrate and to harmonise, thereby providing lift to all to rise higher instead of degenerating itself or anything else.

THE NEW POLICY WAS NOT NEW, RATHER

A phase of the Continuum

Many scholars regard the policy of Guru Hargobind as new one but this conclusion is unwarranted. As a matter of fact, the policy followed by Hargobind was the same as it was pursued by his predecessors; only it flowered and became more known under the stress of circumstances. When Guru Nanak

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began his work, he keenly felt the political degradation of his people as also their religious deterioration. He wanted to see them free in every way, from the foreign yoke as well as from the trammels of the priestly class. According to him "Only fools or idiots try to rule over others" (Basant). He condemned the Lodies for their cowardice and up-braided the Moghul invaders for their tyranny. He lashed up the ebbing patriotism of his people, who abjectly offered loyalty to the alien rulers and would mimick their fashions and manners in order to be acecptable to them (Var Asa). All this was not spiritual, yet it issued from the heart of a Bhakta who saw earthly freedom was rooted in spiritual freedom, and could not be separated from it. This may sound strange to those whose regard saint as a recluse muttering mantras in a far-flung corner. The Sikh Gurus, however, were of different mould. They thought it not inconsistent with their religious ideals to take active measures to teach service of mankind as much through advancement of trade, art and learning as through holy communion, high thinking and noble living.

No doubt they were humble, gentle, and sweet, yet when their self-respect was touched they knew how to be firm as Guru Angad did when he was threatened by Humayun. Under the third and the fourth Gurus, the number of the Sikhs had increased considerably and the Sikh movement had become an arena of opposing forces, wherein the Guru had to fight heroically against the odds. Guru Arjan talked of his struggles in terms of wrestling matches (Sri Rag) "Under the stimulating leadership, the Sikhs had acquired an intensity of character which pitched them against all tyranny." After describing the work of organisation he had effected among his Sikhs, the Guru says, "Now the order of the Merciful has gone forth that no one shall molest another. And the Sikhs had been sufficiently prepared what that order meant". Bir Bal threatened to punish the Guru if he did not pay to him a stipulated amount. The Guru refused to do so. Since just at that time, Birbal was called upon to quell the rebellion of the Yusufzais, nothing came of it. The war was averted but it is clear that the war which broke out during the time of Guru Hargobind, could start earlier; only Providence postponed it. The coming events cast their shadows before, and Guru Arjan before leaving for Lahore to be presented before Jahangir, clearly spelled the policy to be pursued by his son.

The unjust execution of Guru Arjan Dev convinced the Sikhs that they should not knuckle under evil but combat it. Guru Hargobind, on the occasion of his accession, wore two swords; one to represent spiritual and the other temporal interests.

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The Imprisonment

Soon after the formulation of the above-mentioned policy, the Guru was imprisoned in the Gwalior Fort. Various reasons have been ascribed to his imprisonment. Most of Sikh accounts assert that after the Guru's pontification, Chandu once again requested the Guru to accept the hand of his daughter. The Guru refused and Chandu began to plan for his destruction. As chance would have it, Jahangir fell ill and called some astrologer to suggest him some way how he could restore health. Chandu bribed the astrologer and made him say that he could be cured if some holy man would undergo penance in the fort of Gwalior and vicariously Guru Hargobind was recommended for the purpose. Accordingly, the Guru was shut up in the fort.

Obviously, this account is more a fable than history. The story suffers from many improbabilities. Firstly, nowhere in the contemporary Moghul records, the name of Chandu as Dewan has been mentioned and secondly even if we believe that penance of some holy man can cure disease, the imprisonment and subsequent ill-treatment meted to the Guru could have not ensured the penance for the cure of the Emperor. According to M. Akbar, the Guru was imprisoned on charge of embezzlement of some money[1]. Cunningham also says that the Guru was involved in difficulties with the emperor for retaining for himself that money which he should have disbursed to his troops. From the account of Cunningham, it appears that the Guru was in the service of the Emperor. Both these authorities base their conclusion on a passage of Dabistan translated by Troyer. We have examined the passage and we are sure that the passage makes no reference whatsoever, to the effect that the Guru was in Imperial service. Hence the view of Muhammad Akbar and of Cunningham is unfounded. The correct translation of the passage is as under :—

> "He had many difficulties to contend with. One of them was, that he adopted the style of a soldier, wore a sword contrary to the custom of his father, maintained a retinue and began to follow the chase The emperor in order to extort from him the balance of the fine which had been imposed on Arjan Mal, sent him to Gwalior fort .."

Archer also gives a very funny story regarding the cause of the imprisonment of the Guru. He says 'there is some evidence that the Guru himself was once captured by a band of

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1. Muhammad Akbar : The Punjab under the Mughals, p. 194.

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irregulars whether they were Sikhs or Rajputs and was detained by them in Gwalior fortress until a fine was paid for his release.[1] Archer's view is supported by no evidence. He should have known that the fort was neither in the possession of the Rajputs nor of the Sikhs during the time of Guru. Moreover, Bhai Gurdas himself in one of his vars says that the Guru was imprisoned by the Moghul Emperor.

The true cause is that Jahangir, alarmed at the royal state and military preparations of the Guru, wanted to retard the growth of the Sikh movement or to secure orderliness of the Sikhs in general. Natha Mal and Abdulla 'In Coronation Ode' compared the turban of the Guru with that of Jahangir and extolled his qualities which far surpassed those of the contemporary Moghul Emperor. Mohasn Fani[2] also seems to support this view. Bhai Gurdas also seems to suggest the same 'The former Guru used to sit in the temple; the present Guru was sent into the fortress by the Emperor.'

Closely connected with all this, a question can legitimately be asked, "Were the military preparation of the Guru who was still in his teens, on such a great scale that they could pose a threat to the Moghul Empire ?"

There is no doubt that the military preparations were insignificant and negligible but its potentialities could not be denied. At the same time, what the Sikh records say about the intrigues of the enemies of the Guru and his family should not be entirely ignored. As Prof. Beni Prasad suggests "The Emperor's own remark in the Tuzuk make it, more or less clear that even in the more serious matter of Guru Arjan's execution he had been goaded into action by others and it is not at all improbable that these very same men now procured Guru Hargobind's imprisonment. Historical facts also lend some substance to the whole affair. Jahangir, on his way to Kabul and back, had twice halted at Lahore for some days in 1607 and beginning of 1608 and it may well be that it was on these occasions that Hargobind's enemies procured the Emperor's audience and made their representations against the young Guru.

Period of Detention

Mohsan Fani[3] states that Guru Hargobind had to remain a prisoner in the fort of Gwalior for a period of twelve years. Gordon also follows him.

1. Archer John Olar : The Sikhs, p. 173.
2. Beni Prasad : Jahangir, p. 150.
3. Debistan, Vol. II, p. 74.

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According to Panth Parkash the period of imprisonment covered a little over two months. Some Sikh records hint that the period of internment lasted for only forty days. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh say that the period of the detention of the Guru was only two years. Because of the divergent opinions, we cannot reach any conclusion without conducting a thorough probe into the problem.

Let us examine, first of all, the statement of Mohsan Fani who was contemporary and a friend of Guru Hargobind. If we assume that this is correct, the period of 12 years must be fitted in somewhere between 1606 and 1627, the latter year being the year of Jahangir's death; but it is impossible to fit it in this period. All accounts, Sikh or non-Sikh, agree that Guru Hargobind was imprisoned and released during the time of Jahangir and towards the close of Jahangir's period, as the Guru had turned to be the friend of Jahangir. It shows that in A.D. 1627 the Guru was not in the prison and he could have not been imprisoned later than 1614, the period of his imprisonment being twelve years. The Guru could not have been in the prison for the period between 1614 to 1626 on account of the following :—

(1) Kaula, the daughter of the Qazi was brought to Amritsar in 1620.

(2) Guru Hargobind excavated the famous tank Kaulsar in her memory and we are told that this was done in 1621.

(3) Baba Atal Rai, the Guru's second son by Nanki, was born in 1620.

(4) Guru's son Ani Rai was born in 1618, his second son Suraj Mal in 1617 and his eldest son Baba Gurditta towards the close of 1613.

Thus it is clear that it is impossible to find a period of 12 years which can be fitted in between 1606 to 1627 during which the Guru might have been in the jail.

Macauliffe states that the Guru was summoned to Delhi in 1612 and when his mother saw that he did not return in time, she became very anxious and sent Bhai Jetha to Delhi and succeeded in curing emperor who had been troubled with fearful visions and as a reward, the emperor ordered the release of the Guru. The period of the detention is hinted as only 40 days. But this seems improbable because the matter was not so easy as the Sikhs chroniclers would have us believe. Frantic efforts were made to assure the release of the Guru; and it is quite probable that the intercession of the saint Mian Mir had to be *requisitioned* for that purpose. Moreover, the stories connected

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with the Guru in jail could be true only if the Guru had been detained in the Jail longer than 40 days or so.

Some Sikh scholars, however, opine that the Guru was summoned to Delhi in 1612; but this view also does not stand the test of historical analysis Jahangir was not available at Delhi or Agra from 1613 to 1619. Nor was he at Mewar, and from November 1616 to March 1617, he was at Mandu.[1] There is, however, a period of about five years from A.D. 1607 to A.D. 1612 during which the Guru could have been in the fort. The facts relating to the marriage of the Guru with Nanki also throws a flood of light on the subject. Nanki was married to the Guru just before the birth of Bhai Gurditta in 1613. Question arises as to why the marriage was postponed till that time. The argument that Nanki was too young may not, perhaps, carry any weight in view of the fact that the child marriage was the much-honoured custom during those days. Moreover, even if Nanki was young, it was not essential that the bride should go and live with bridegroom immediately after her marriage. Obviously, there were some serious reasons which deterred the mother of the Guru from marrying him to Nanki. According to I.B. Bannerjee, the serious reasons must have been his internment in the Gwalior fort where he probably remained for five years from 1607 to 1612. Even this period of five years does not seem to be correct view. It is a well known fact that the Guru was interned on account of his war-like activities, and it was but natural that such activities must have taken some time before they posed a threat to the Moghul rule We must therefore, allow at least two or even three years, for his preparations. Thus if we make allowance of two years, for the military preparations, the period of imprisonment would come out to be three years i.e. from 1609 to 1612.

Life of the Guru in the Fort

The Gwalior Jail did not un-nerve the Guru, rather it provided him an opportunity to influence the Rajput princes and others and explain to them his point of view. Though the life in the fort was orduous, yet he never lost balance or equipoise. The Guru had to live on scanty ration. More often than not, even that he distributed among the needy prisoners. According to Prof. Satbir Singh, the Guru had to safeguard himself from the poison which was often administered in veiled form to the enemies whom the emperor considered very dangerous. The Guru, perhaps, because of this, lived on the food supplied by one grass-cutter, who bacame his devout disciple. The Guru's

1. Refer to Beni Prasad, p. 237, 277, 300.

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demeanour impressed the jail superintendent so much that he began to serve food to the Guru from his own house.

Release

The Guru was at last released probably in 1612. Various reasons have been attributed to his release.

Mohsan Fani & Macauliffe's views

According to Mohsan Fani'[1] many Sikhs, during the period of the Guru's confinement in Gwalior, used to come there and bow before the walls of the fort. The emperor was moved by pity and ordered Guru's release. According to Macauliffe, Jahangir fell ill and had been troubled by fearful dreams and visions. Bhai Jetha, a pious Sikh went to Delhi. He succeeded in soothing the emperor and thus in return obtained the orders for the Guru's release.

Obviously both the aforesaid views do not seem to be correct. The release of the Guru was a political decision and it is unlikely that it was made under the force of pity or superstitions or some emotional outburst.

As a matter of fact with the lapse of time, Jahangir's attitude underwent a change. The reasons are not far to seek. Firstly, after some time, political sagacity dawned on Jahangir and he realised that without recourse to the liberal religious policy, it was not possible for him to maintain stability and tranquillity in his vast empire, and secondly, Nur Jahan imbued with Sufi ideology had her effect on Jahangir. Mian Mir once again began to be respected in the royal house, especially because Nur Jahan was his devotee. Incidentally, Mian Mir was the friend of Guru Arjan who occupied a very high place in his regard. Guru Arjan Dev's remarkable calmness even in the face of torture of the worst kind on the part of the Moghul Empire raised him still more in Mian Mir's estimation. No wonder Mian Mir had great love for Guru Hargobind and the ideology he was championing. He along with Wazir Khan and Nizamuddin approached Jahangir with the request that the Guru, being innocent, should be released. Jahangir, who was already aware of the innocence of the Guru and who, by this time, had emancipated himself from the orthodox section of the nobles responded to their request and ordered for his release. Thus Mian Mir, Nizam-ud-Din, and Wazir Khan's efforts brought about a change in Jahangir's heart and henceforward

1. Debistan : Vol. II, p. 274.

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there were established cordial relations between Jahangir and the Guru.

The news of the Guru's release struck consternation among the Rajas who were imprisoned in the fort as hostages for millions of rupees because in Guru's release they were losing a spiritual mentor and moral elixir. The Guru requested Jahangir to set the Rajas at liberty alongwith him. To make the task easy for the Government, he stood surety for their loyal behaviour. Jahangir, who by this time had revised his opinion about the Guru, granted the request and ordered the release of these rulers as well. It was for this reason that Guru Hargobind was given the title of 'Bandi Chhor Baba'. According to Sikh tradition, the Rajas who were released were fifty-two in number.

With the Guru's release opens a new epoch in the life of the Guru—the epoch of friendly relations between the Guru and Jahangir, which lasted till the death of the Emperor. According to Sikh tradition, Jahangir paid a visit to Amritsar and offered to bear the whole expenses of the construction of 'Akal Takht'. The Guru, however, refused to avail of the offer and uttered 'I and my Sikhs would build this edifice with the money earned by the sweat of the brow. Never will it be the memorial to the King's charity, rather I would like it to be the symbol of the sacrifice and service of the Sikhs.' Likewise, the Guru accompanied the Imperial camp during the emperor's tour of Rajputana and also subdued Tara Chand of Nalagarh who had continued for a long time in open rebellion and all efforts to subdue him had failed (A.D. 1618). But what exactly the position of the Guru vis-a-vis Jahangir was, it is not clear.

Nature of Relationship

Mohsan Fani says 'Hargobind was always attached to the stirrup of the victorious Jahangir'[1], meaning thereby that Guru Hargobind was attached to the Moghul Government in some capacity or the other.

Two later Sikh works Panth Parkash and Itehas Guru Khalsa assert that 'He (the Guru) was appointed a sort of supervisor over the Punjab officials and was placed in command of 700 horses and five guns'.[2] This, on the face of it, seems absurd and is positively disapproved by the almost decisive

1. Debistan-i-Mazahib, Vol. II, pp. 273-74. The Guru attached himself to Yar Khan the accused who held the office of a faydar in the Nawabi of the Punjab and who was in administration.
2. Panth Parkash, p. 107, Itehas Guru Khalsa, p. 128.

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negative evidence of the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. In Jahangir's memoirs, wherein minutest details have been given in respect of Jahangir's life and achievements, even the name of Guru Hargobind does not occur.[1]

Dr. I.B. Bannerjee opines that Guru Hargobind was holding a very minor position in the administration and for some period at least he was a mere assistant of a Faujdar.[2]

Some Sikh writers however, believe that the Guru was not at all in the employ of the Moghul emperor. He had purely friendly relations with Jahangir. Even while he accompanied Jahangir to Kashmir[3] or Rajputana, he did it out of sheer friendship.

Though we do not come across any positive historical evidence, yet it is difficult for us to believe that the Guru entered into Moghul Imperial service. If the Guru accompanied Jahangir in his military campaign in Rajputana, it was not because of the fact that he was in Moghul employ but he did so, firstly because he had friendship with Jahangir who had started following in the footsteps of Akbar and secondly he wanted to have first hand knowledge of the military strength and strategy of the Moghul Armed Forces.

Whatever the nature of the relation of the Guru with Jahangir, friendship there was and to enter into friendship with Jahangir was the need of the hour. The incarceration of the Guru made no difference to his plans of strengthening the defence potential of his community. His relations with the Emperor Jahangir were now better, and obviously there was no immediate danger to the Sikhs from the side of the Government. But he took a long range view of the problem and did not allow his personal relations with the Emperor to come in the way of his programme. The Guru also used the period of peace following upon his release from imprisonment to consolidate the ranks of his community. During the period he was in prison, the strings of discipline had greatly loosened and several selfish Masands had arrogated to themselves powers that were never vested in them. They had become corrupt and strayed from the sphere of their proper functions. Some of them had begun to pose as Guru in their own right and had each raised a body of followers or

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1. Beni Prasad : Jahangir, p. 454.
2. I. B. Bannerjee : Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. II, p. 13.
3. Macauliffe nowhere says that the Guru accompanied Jahangir to Kashmir. The Guru no doubt visited Kashmir but that was due to the devotion of Bhag Bhari, the mother of Sewa Das.

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devotees called Shehlang. Guru Hargobind thought it high time to penalise the corrupt missionaries and made a lesson of them to impress upon their functionaries. But this was not enough. So long as the institutions of Charnamrit remained unchanged, the individual Masands would continue to enjoy the privilege of initiation of new Sikhs by virtue of this having been so authorised by the central authority of the Guru. Guru Hargobind realised the defect in this system and declared that in future any five good Sikhs could also prepare and administer charanamrit and initiate people into the fold of Sikhism. The measure did not end the order of the Masands. But the initiating of an alternative arrangement for the admission of new members into the community did, to a certain extent, erode the authority of the Masands. During the same period, the Guru travelled in the Punjab and outside it to spread his mission after the manner of Guru Nanak, and in fact after Guru Nanak, he was the first Guru who undertook religious tours on such a large scale.

The friendly relations between Guru Hargobind and Jahangir wipped up jealousy in the mind of Meharban who at once went to Lahore to see his friends to hatch some new conspiracy against the Guru. The Guru sent Bhai Paira and Bhai Pirana to dissuade him from harbouring hostile designs. They tried their best, but Meharban was intransigent and seemed to be determined to harm the Guru.

The Guru, at the failure of the negotiations went himself to Meharban to conciliate him. Meharban gave him a respectful reception. The Guru opened the conversation. "Thy father and mine are in heaven. We are both brothers now, so we ought not to bear each other enmity from which happiness can never result." The Guru added, "Lord of the world, the Supreme Being, will not be pleased to bestow happiness or prosperity on those who harbour evil in their hearts while, on the contrary, the creator will make him happy who is pleased with the happiness of others." The Guru then quoted the following from Kabir :—

"Indulge not in enmity and bickering, O my soul,
Do good deeds and gain their reward."

Meharban, far from being convinced by all this good advice, only became more enraged, whereupon the Guru retired to his own camp. He remained several months at Lahore and then came back to Amritsar.

PREACHING TOURS

As it has been pointed out in the aforesaid paragraphs, the Guru considered it imperative to attend to the work of

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proselytisation as well, especially when during the period of his imprisonment, many hypocrite Masands and Sikhs had set afloat many concocted and anti-Sikh stories and some of them had the audacity to put in circulation the fake 'Hukam-Namas' in order to sanctify their own view-point to exploit the innocent Sikhs.

As a matter of fact, after Guru Nanak, he was the first Guru who went outside the Punjab to spread his religion. He travelled from place to place like Guru Nanak and went as far as Kashmir in the North and Nanak Mata near Pili Bhit in the East.

Kartarpur

The Guru started his preaching campaign from Amritsar. Thereafter he reached Kartarpur where he stayed for seven months and made it the headquarter of Sikhism in Doab area. Many youths from the village, named Bara Pir joined the Guru's army. Having visited Mukerian and the villages in its neighbourhood, the Guru reached the bank of the Beas on the Majha side where he laid the foundation of a new city known as

Hargobindpur

Hargobindpur[1] in 1621. The Guru did a lot to improve this city because this city on account of his peculiar location was very useful from the military point of view. Here, the Guru roused the ire of a begoted Hindu Bhagwan Das Gherar who in A.D. 1621[2] picked up a quarrel with the Guru and was killed in the conflict that ensued. His son, Rattan Chand lodged a complaint with Abdullah Khan, the faujdar of Jullundur who attacked the Guru. Once again the victory sided with the Sikhs. After three days of hard fighting, Jullundur forces were defeated, Abdullah Khan and Rattan Chand were among the slains. On the Guru's side among the killed was Mathura Bhat, son of Baba Bhika[3]. After this, the Guru returned to Amritsar.

Amritsar

It is said that Jahangir visited the city and also offered pecuniary help in the extension and completion of Akal Takht, but the Guru politely declined the offer.

The Guru in Uttar Pradesh

The Guru visited different places in Uttar Pradesh also to consolidate his spiritual and temporal hold on the community, His visit to this area was prompted by the news, that Almast who had been preaching Sikh religion at Nanak Mata, had been expelled from his shrine by the Jogis who had also burnt the

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1. Macauliffe : Sikh religion pp. 50-54. The original name of the city was Gobindpura but later on it began to be called Hargobindpur. The construction work of the city was assigned to the care of Ismaeel, Bhai Amio, Bhai Bula, Bhai Jetha, Bhai Lalo and Bhai Kalayan.
2. Dr. Fauja Singh : Chronology of the battles of Garu Hargobind, Punjab History Conference, p. 136.
3. *Ibid.*

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sacred *Pipal* tree under which Guru Nanak had held debate with the followers of Gorakh Nath. The Guru rushed to the place, restored order and made Almast the incharge of it. The Guru remained there for some time and set up a methodical Sikh service under the guidance of Almast. Since then, the place has borne the undisturbed name of 'Nanak Mata' and remained in the possession of Udasi Sikhs. **Nanak Mata**

The Guru having done preaching work in the area of Pili Bhit reached Darauli, district Ferozpur, wherefrom he proceeded to Amritsar.

In 1620, the Guru went northwards into Kashmir. Since the visit of Guru Nanak, Brahm Das and his descendants had been looking after the Sikh congregations in the Kashmir Valley. Guru Arjan had deputed Madho Sodhi to preach Sikh religion and supervise Sikh affairs. Guru Hargobind proceeded thither through Sialkot, Wazirabad, Mirpur, Bhimbar and Behram. According to Teja Singh and Ganda Singh[1], the Guru converted thousands who had gone over to Islam. He set the organisation of the Sikhs in order and appointed Bhai Garhia to look after the Sikhs. **Kashmir**

Enroute to Srinagar, the Guru met Kattu Shah, a converted Muhammadan and faithful Sikh who had visited him at Amritsar. The Guru passed a night at his residence and afforded him opportunity to feel happy. **Meeting with Kattu Shah**

From that place, the Guru proceeded to Srinagar where he was accorded warm welcome by Sewa Das. Sewa Das's mother, Bhag Bhari, offered him the robe which she had prepared herself with the yarn, she had herself spun as a token of her dedication to the Guru's cause. Overwhelmed with the devotion for the Guru, she thanked the Guru for his condescension to her place and uttered :— **Srinagar** **Bhag Bhari**

"Who but thee, my jewel, could do such a thing
Cherisher of the poor, Lord of the Earth,
thou has put over my head the umbrella of spiritual sovereignty.

Both Sewa Das and his mother served the Guru with zeal and devotion, as long as the Guru stayed at Srinagar. **Sewa Das**

The Guru was paid homage by crowds of Kashmiris, men and women, both from Srinagar and the surrounding villages and embraced Sikhism.

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1. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh : A Short History of the Sikhs, p. 41.

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Hungry Mouth is Guru's Treasure

During his stay at Srinagar a party of Sikhs came to him and requested him to taste the honey which they had brought along with them to offer to the Guru. The Guru declined to the offering. On the repeated requests of the Sikhs, the Guru explained to them that he would never touch it, because it was not given to Bhai Kattu Shah who was taken ill with an attack of aesthma and asked for a drop of honey to assuage his distress. The Guru, much painted at this type of attitude on the part of the Sikhs, exhorted "Hungry mouth is Guru's Treasure".

While the Guru was in Srinagar Bhag Bhari breathed her last. The Guru constructed a temple before his departure and entrusted its care to Sewa Singh.

Gujrat

The Guru returned to the Punjab through Bara Mula on the river Jhelum. The next day he visited the spot where the renowned Rikhi Kashyap had dwelt, and where Vishnu was said to have the incarnation of a dwarf. Thencefrom the Guru proceeded to Gujrat in the Punjab where he met Shah Daula, a much-revered saint of the city. Shah Daula was astonished at the sight of the Guru with swords hanging on his both sides, aigrette attached to his turban and a hawk perched on his wrist. In his discussion with the Guru, Shah Daula raised a point; how can you (the Guru) be a religious man when you have a wife and children and possess worldly wealth and have arms. The Guru retorted "A wife is man's conscience, his children prepetuate his memory, wealth enables him to live, arms are needed to extirpate the tyrants."

Mandiali

After Gujrat, the Guru proceeded to Wazirabad and thencefrom to Hafizabad. Therefrom, the Guru went to a village called Mutto Bhai. After staying here for some time, the Guru reached Mandiali. Here Dwarka, a devout Sikh of the Guru married his daughter, Bibi Marwahi, to the Guru.

While still at Mandiali the Guru was informed by Langha of the sustained efforts of some of the Mughal officers and ulemas to poison the mind of the Emperor to destroy the sacred buildings of the Sikhs. The Guru took only a casual notice and proceeded to Talwandi, the birth place of Guru Nanak. The Guru imparted instructions to the people who had gathered there in connection with the Nimani fair. From that place, the Guru proceeded to Madai. Next sojourn of the Guru was Manga in the Lahore district. From there he proceeded to Amritsar, where as usual, great rejoicings were held on his return.

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TOURS IN MALWA REGION OF THE PUNJAB

Shah-jahan's accession, an event of great import-ance in Shikh History

Shah Jahan's accession to the throne was an event of great importance in the history of the devolpment of Sikhism. Shah Jahan's religious outlook was narrow as compared to that of his father who after 1611 had definitely reverted to the policy of Akbar—so much so that the influence of the Naqshbandis on him was reduced only to be peripheral. Shah Jahan was quite under the influence of Naqshbandis, when he ascended the throne, although he did not become rabid communalist like Aurangzeb. This being so, the Sikh Movement would have to undergo the stress of political and religious thinking of the political authorities. The Guru, true to the guidelines given by his predecessors, was endeavouring for the evolution of pluralistic society and for that matter he was preparing the people to resist any attempt to subvert his programme. Naturally, the type of society could not fit in the conceptual frame-work of Shah Jahan and his people. The incongruency between the ideas of the Government and those of the Guru was sure to be fully exploited by all those persons or groups who had personal enmity towards the Guru and were constantly on the look-out for some opportunity to strike the Guru and impede the onward march of the Sikh Movement.

In view of all this, it was but natural for the Guru to take requisite steps to fashion response to the challenge which, obviously, had many ramifications. According to Gian Singh, the celebrated author of Twarikh Guru Khalsa, Tara Chand, the ruler of Hadur (Nalagrah) waited upon the Guru in A.D. 1629 on his way back from Lahore to Khadur. He requested the Guru to pay visit to his state. The Guru sent Baba Gurditta with him and promised to visit his state later on. After some time, the Guru left for Hadur and in course of pleasant sports, the Raja offered him a piece of land for his permanent abode. This was, in fact, a much sought-for opportunity. He wanted an alternative headquarter, and this place suited him the most; firstly, because it was not far off from the plains of the Punjab and secondly, it was outside the administrative jurisdiction of the Mughal officials. Incidentally the establishment of the Sikh headquarter at this place, served the political purpose of the ruler of Hadur who wanted to build a counterpoise to the power of the ruler of Bilaspur. Bhai Gurditta founded the town on the offered piece of land and named it Kiratpur (the place where always the praises of God are sung).

Alter-native Head-quater

The problem of alternative headquarter having been solved, the Guru redoubled his activities to spread his mission particularly in the Malwa region of the Punjab, as also to impart

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military training to his Sikhs to resist the excesses of the political power. The reasons were not far too seek.

Preaching in Malwa

Malwa region was specially selected on two accounts. Firstly, its people were still uncommitted to any major religion as most of them were Sultanias, the faith which was not rooted in any socio-religious philosophy and hence they were liable to be easily influenced by Sikh religion, and secondly, the region being a vaste tract of waste and arid land had not been under the wooden control of the Mughals.

The Guru undertook his religious tour of the region with gusto combined with full seriousness. He visited Zira, Rode Lande, Gill, Kotra and Hari. The last two villages were inhabited by the Bhullar Jats who were at the time of the visit of the Guru had gathered together to pay homage to their first ancestor and had prepared a grand feast to be offered to the priests etc. The Guru laughed at them and made them realise their folly. Chaudhary Lal Kaura was hallowed by the Guru. At this juncture, the Sidhu jats who claimed their descent from their ancestor Marajh, driven by the Pachadas from their villages, came to the Guru for blessings and help. Their leaders Dhan, Mohan and his son Karam Chand waited upon the Guru and requested him to help them to secure a piece of land from the Bhullars for habitation. The Guru asked the Bhullars to part with some land to enable the Sikhs to settle. The Bhullars flew into rage whereupon the Guru advised the Sidhus to found their village away from this place. The Sidhus founded a village in 1627 about three miles from Mari and named it

Marajh

Marajh after the name of their ancestor. The Bhullars were piqued up and they attacked the Sidhus of Marajh. The Guru sent his brave soldiers such as Bhai Bidhi Chand, Jaita, Jetha, Parana, Saktu, Paira and Mala etc., for their help and the Bhullars could not oust them.

After that the Guru having visited Marajh, Dabwali, Bhadaur, Mahal, Ded Maluke, Demru en-route, reached Darauli. After staying for some time at Darauli, the Guru decided to move in the Malwa region again. He having sent Baba Gurditta, Baba Tegh Bahadur and his mother, Nanaki ji to Kartarpur and Suraj Mal and his mother to Kiratpur, proceeded

Bara Ghar

to Bara Ghar, a village situated at a distance of five miles from Darauli. Before his departure, the Guru blessed the Darauli people and gave them a '*pothi*' and a *katar* (small sword) as monuments. Rai Bhag Mal and Akal and many others of the village of Bara Ghar accorded the hearty welcome and provided all possible facilities. After staying here for 5 days the Guru proceeded further. Having visited Mado, Lopo and Sidhwan etc., the Guru reached Sidhar.

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Rai Jodh a big zamindar of Kangar, inspired by his wife Bhagan who was the daughter of Bhag Mal Gill a devotee of the Guru, waited upon the Guru and was so impressed by him that he expressed his desire into the fold of Sikhism. Giani Gyan Singh says that Mai Bhagan requested the Guru to initiate them to his faith. The Guru much pleased at this, uttered, "The torch of Sikhism will ever give light in your house." The impact of the Guru's message was at once deep and wide-spread. After some days, Umar Shah, the brother of Bhai Jodh and many others belonging to or having relation with his family, embraced Sikhism.

Sikhs from Peshawar & Kabul

Shortly before, a party of Sikhs from Peshawar and Kabul departed from their abodes to benefit from the message of the Guru. They were accompanied by Masands such as Bakht Mal, Tara Chand. They had many things to offer to the Guru including two horses, named Dil Bagh and Gul Bagh, of surpassing beauty and fleetness. On the way, the animals were forcibly seized by the Emperor's officials who desired to present them to Shah Jahan. On reaching Sidhwan, they made obeisance to the Guru and laid before him the offerings they had brought along with them except the horses. The Guru blessed them but was shocked at the high-handedness of the Mughal Government. The party after a brief sojourn, returned home except Bakht Mal, Tara Chand and Dayal Chand who remained with the Guru at the village named Bhai Rupa.

Impact of the Preaching Tours

The Guru's preaching tours, in Majha, Malwa, Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir were very successful. Everywhere the Guru reaped a rich harvest of converts. But in Malwa, the success was a little more marked and significant. In this region the message of the Guru had tremendous effect on the people. People, in flocks, embraced Sikhism. Many Zamindars also sought entry into the fold of the Sikh faith and were inspired so much by the charismatic personality of the Guru that they, later on rendered active service to the Guru in his resistance to the unscrupulousness of the Mughal Government. The faith of *Sakhi Sarwar* suffered a considerable setback in this area, for many *Sakhi Sarwarias* gave up the old faith in favour of Sikhism. The cult of Goddess which was quite popular in this region also began to lose its hold on the minds of the people who found in Guru's message emancipation of their minds from superstitions and priestly class as also hope for establishing a new type of society. For the first time, in the history of Indian religions, they were coming across a religious leader who was committed to the ideal of resisting all types of exploitation, injustice and tyranny. As a matter of fact, the Guru's close identification with the lower and down-trodden classes

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and his constant endeavours for their welfare and upliftment made the Guru the cynosure of the people.

A PERIOD OF OPEN HOSTILITY WITH SHAH JAHAN

Within a few years of the succession of Shah Jahan, the Sikh-Mughal relations became strained. The ties of cordial relations as they had been since A.D. 1611, were snapped and a period of open hostility started. Many factors were responsible for this big change.

Shah Jahan's Fanaticism

The foremost factor was the religious policy of Shah Jahan. During his period there was serving to orthodoxy and religious fanaticism was at considerable height. According to Sri Ram Sharma "He (Shah Jahan) took keen interest in the welfare of new converts to Muslim faith and appointed special officers to look after them. In accordance with one of his orders, if any Muslim gave up his religion, he was severely dealt with. Badshah Nama, a contemporary work tells us that Shah Jahan ordered the destruction of all temples which were under construction or were still incomplete." Three temples were demolished in Punjab and mosques were raised in their places. The Baoli of Guru Arjan situated in Dabbi Bazaar, Lahore was filled up with rubbish and the kitchen (langar) building attached to it was converted into a mosque. In 1632, when he was returning from Kashmir, he found that some Hindus of Rajauri, Bhimber, and Gujrat accepted Muslim girls as wives and converted them to their faith. The Emperor stopped such marriages and Muslim women already married were seized from their husbands who were fined, and in certain cases they were executed. They could retain their wives only on their embracing Islam. As many as 4500 such women were recovered. In 1635, it was reported to the Emperor that a Muslim girl Zinab had been converted and was taken as a wife by Dalpat, a Hindu of Sirhind. The woman, along with her seven children, one son and six daughters, was taken away and the man was executed.[1]

Naqashbandi Order

The propaganda of Naqshbandis was having its effect. In Jahangir's times, they could effect the people in a limited way

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1. Abdul Hamid Lahori : Badshah Nama, ii, p. 57-58.
   Khafi Khan : Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, i, 510.

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but now they started their activities with redoubled zeal. Masud, the son of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, spared no pains to spread his views. The high officials of the Government came under his influence. Aurangzeb often listened to his lectures when he went to Gujrat where Aurangzeb was living as the governor of the province of Gujrat. Masud was also enamoured of the prince and prayed for his success in unambiguous terms in the impending struggle for the throne. The activities of the Naqshbandis were more marked in the Punjab. They established many Madrassas, schools of learning, obviousy to influence the men through pen. The cumulative effect of all these activities was that a big segment of the Muslim population had become orthodox and vibrantly conscious of their group interests. Undoubtedly such people would not like such movements that might enlighten the people to awaken to new realisation of resisting any attempt to exploit them for a single social or religious group.

Some Sikh scholars, as for instance Professor Satbir Singh aver that Meharban, the son of Prithi Chand, was also responsible for the strained relations between the Guru and Shah Jahan. He says, "He (Meharban) entered into holy alliance with Karam Chand, the son of Dewan Chandu and with Jamil Khan, the son of late Sulhi Khan. All these persons did their worst to poison the mind of Jahangir, but they failed, although they succeeded in dinning some fabricated facts about the Guru into the ears of the heir-apparent and no wonder he remembered many forged stories."[1] Similarly, it is said that Dhir Mal did his best to bring about snapping of the ties of friendship between the Guru and the Emperor. We do not subscribe to the aforesaid views. We do not know any reliable historical source assigning the responsibility of the strained relations between the Guru and Emperor to Meharban. Nowhere do we find any hint of the meeting of Meharban with Khurram. No doubt, Meharban bore enmity towards the Guru, but to regard him as a determining factor vis-a-vis the relations between the Guru and the Emperor is obviously a case of unabashed distortion.

Similarly, Dhir Mal has been blamed for the change in the policy of Shah Jahan towards the state. This is also incorrect. The protagonists of this view quote Macauliffe in their support. Macauliffe says :—

"Dhir Mal, his (Guru) grandson, accepted the evil forebodings of the Masands, said that the Guru would certainly be

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1. Satbir Singh : Sada Itihas, Vol. I, p. 257.

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defeated. The Imperial army had arrived like a flight of locusts. The Guru's army was insignificant. It did not even bear the same ratio to the Imperial army as condiment to the viands of a feast. 'The Guru', continued Dhir Mal, 'is in one of his first fits of obstinacy and knoweth not the enemy's prowess and strategy. I shall, therefore, probably attain my object and succeed him in his holy office.' Dhir Mal's mind having been thus perverted, he sat down and wrote the following letter :

> Brother Painda Khan, my grandfather hath expelled and disgraced thee without cause, but I know thee to be my friend, and I will do the best for their interests. If thou come tonight and make a sudden attack, the fort and its treasure will fall into your hands for here there is no preparation made. I will render thee every assistance."

From the above account, it becomes clear that Dhir Mal was not true to the Guru but it does not lend support to the view that Dhir Mal's machinations were responsible for the change in the policy of Shah Jahan towards the Guru.

In 1629, the governorship of Lahore was assigned to Mukhlis Khan. His Dewan and Faujdar Kuliz Khan and Abul Hasan who were present at Lahore during the time of Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom and had a fair knowledge of the potentialities of the Sikh Movement were strongly opposed to its development. Mukhlis Khan and Qazi Rustam Khan were also of their view. Evidently, the clash between the Guru and the Government was inevitable.

Case of Kaulan

Another event that contributed in effecting a change in the attitude of Shah Jahan was that of Kaulan. Who was Kaulan ? Many views have been expressed in this connection; some scholars say that she was the daughter of Qazi Rustam Khan of Lahore. Dr. G.C. Narang and Cunningham say that she was simply a concubine of the Qazi[1]. The author of Umda-Tul-Twarikh avers that Kaulan was the purchased maid slave of Qazi who showed devotion to the Guru's faith. Sardar Karam Singh historian also feels like that and says "Kaulan was not daughter of the Qazi; she was only a concubine. According to the prevalent custom, she was maltreated by the Qazi for her religious views and not liked by the Sunnis and this

1. Refer to 'Guru Hargobind' by Satbir Singh, Punjabi University Publication.

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being so, she was constrained to flee to the Guru to seek protection."

The fact seems to be that Kaulan was a Hindu lady, as is also signified by the name Kaulan and was forcibly abducted by the Qazi who kept her as her maid servant or concubine.

It so happened that Kaulan came under the influence of Mian Mir, a famous saint of the day and developed religious views which were far divergent from those held by the orthodox Muslims. Since in those days, the holding and expression of such views on the part of slaves was not permitted, the Qazi began to treat her harshly. This being so, she implored Mian Mir to help her in her difficulty who asked his disciple, Abdulla, to take her to Guru Hargobind. Accordingly, Kaulan reached Amritsar and the Guru true to the expectations of Mian Mir, provided her all possible facilities. The Guru had a separate building prepared for her residence and bade her occupy her time as it pleased her. The incident, however, caused uproar among the Muslims. Rustam Khan was highly incensed. He represented the matter to the Emperor as an abduction and also reiterated his other grievances, on the score of horse; but Jahangir refused to move because he was favourably inclind to the Guru because of the latter's sterling qualities and worth. It is possible that Emperor's decision might have been influenced by the fact that Mian Mir was involved in this affair.

Since the lady was extremely pious, a tank known as Kaulsar[1], was got excavated near 'the tank of nectar' as a befitting memorial to her piety in A.D. 1621. However, there are some Sakhi-Kars who set this matter in altogether different light. Macauliffe also could not escape their influence. According to them, Masand named Sajan was bringing a beautiful horse from Kabul. The horse was forcibly captured by an imperial officer who presented it to the Emperor, who gave it to Qazi Rustam Khan of Lahore. The Guru recovered the horse forcibly and along with that, abducted his daughter.

The story of abduction is altogether wrong. No contemporary account has made a mention of it. Even Mohsan Fani who makes as close an observation as to see whether the Guru, while discharging his arrows brings some feeling of anger on his face or not, does not even allude to this affair. Apart from it, the reputation of the personal character which the Guru enjoyed forbids us to give credence to this story.

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1. Itihas Guru Khalsa : Some Sikhs suppose this name was given to the tank because the Lotus (Kaul) flourishes in it.

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With the succession of Shah Jahan, the case was taken up again. Rustam Khan lodged a complaint to this effect with the Emperor. Since the Shah Jahan had already issued the proclamation that the Muslims converted to other faith will be severly punished, he ragarded this act of Guru Hargobind as contrary to the policy of Government.

Battle of Amritsar, A.D. 1634

Both sides primed for a clash

Sensing the changed temper of the Government, the Guru intensified his activities. Apart from undertaking preaching tours and forging emotional contacts with the people, he stepped up his activities of training his people in the technique of fighting by organising regular training exercises and roused them to a sense of fervent heroism by precept as well as example. The followers of the Guru responded to his call willingly and the Guru became rallying point of disaffection, a potential source of danger to the established order. According to Dr. I.B. Bannerjee "It should not be forgotten that behind all this was a, more or less, compact organisation and religious ideals of a highly intense fervour[1]. Thus the situation which had arisen immediately after the close of Guru Arjan's pontificate was aggravated further and though it might seem that compared with the mighty resources of the Mughul Empire all this was insignificant and hardly worth of serious notice, its potentiality could not be denied. All this and the fact that the Guru seated himself on Akal Takht (the Timeless Throne) heard the complaints of his followers, decided their cases, issued ordainments and was acclaimed with the appellation of 'Sachā Pādshāh' (True King) caused a lot of estrangement between state and the Guru. As a matter of fact, both the parties were primed for a clash and the slightest cause was sufficient to make them go at each other.

The moment came in A.D. 1634[2]. In that year Shah

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1. I.B. Bannerjee : Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. II, p. 21.

2. Dr. Fauja Singh : Chronology of the Battles of Guru Hargobind : Punjab History Conference Proceedings, 1971, Punjabi University, Patiala. Also refer to Bhatvahis Multani Sindhi preserved in the Department of Punjab Historical Studies recently. Our conclusion is that the battles of Amritsar, Lehira and Phagwara were fought on 17th Baisakh B K. 1691 (A.D. 1634), 17th Poh BK 1691 (A.D. 1634), and 29th and 30th Baisakh B.K. 1692 (A.D. 1635) respectively. Thus the fighting started in April 1634 and ended in May 1635. During this period the Guru moved rapidly from Amritstar to Marhraj, from Marhaj to Kartarpur. This picture is more realistic for more typical of a war-scene than the picture provided to us and such writers as Macauliffe and others in which quite some years are shown to intervene between the battles.

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Jahan's soldiers happened to be hunting in the sanctuary of Gumtala, a place in the neighbourhood of Amritsar. Chance so conspired that the Guru along with his retainers was also similarly occupied nearby. According to Prof. Satbir Singh, it was not the Guru but the Sikhs gathered at Amritsar on the Baisakhi day who were engaged in the game of hunting. Whatever be the truth, a clash took place between the Sikhs and the royal soldiers over the issue of royal hawk. One of the royal hawks of the Moghuls who was flying after a victim, strayed away and fell into the hands of a hunting party of the Sikhs. Moved by compassion or for the sake of the fun of the game, the Sikhs set their own hawk on it and the royal hawk was brought down. The royal soldiers came to recover it but because of their impudence, arrogance and their abusive language, the Sikhs refused to part with the bird, and this started the trouble. Altercation led to blows. According to I.B. Bannerjee the imperialists were driven out with a slaughter. This was too great an offence to be lightly passed over and the enemies of the Guru thought it a good opportunity to revive the charges against the Guru, and reminded the Emperor of his alleged misdeeds. According to Prof. Satbir Singh, Kulaz Shah was told how the circumstances moved at Gumtala, who wrote to Shah Jahan for necessary permission to attack the Guru at Amritsar. The Emperor accorded the requisite permission. An expedition consisting of 7000 soldiers under Mukhlis Khan was sent against Guru Har Gobind. The attack was unexpected, for the Guru was then busy with preparations for his daughter's marriage and had no idea of war with the Moghuls, even a gun had to be improvised from the hallow trunk of a tree.

Issue of royal hawk

Imperialists were driven out

Expedition

The battle lasted for two days and it was fought at two places viz., Lohgarh and at the site where now the Khalsa College stands. On the first day, the Moghul detachments attacked Lohgarh, a mini-fortress just outside the city of Amritsar. Since the Guru had received the views of the impending attack, a day earlier, the fort had, to all intents and purposes, been evacuated and had nothing except the sweets prepared for the groom's party which was scheduled to reach the next day. Even then a few brave Sikhs opposed the enemy. Their number being very small as compared with the number of enemy they were soon overcome and destroyed. The Mohammedans proceeded to the Guru's palace in search of him, but they were disappointed to find nothing.

Battle, Ist day

The second day, however, saw a fierce fighting. The Sikhs fought under the supreme command of Bhai Bannia although after his death, the command was assumed by the Guru himself.

Second day

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The Guru's army consisted of archers, horsemen and footmen. A small contingent equipped with muskets also appeared to be there. There was virtually no artillery, because the manufacture of guns was the prerogative of the Government alone. According to Macauliffe, the Sikhs had only one gun and that too was made to hollow tree, fit only to discharge stones and in no case the balls. The weapons of the Guru's soldiers were spears, swords, muskets, arrows etc. The details of the formation of the Sikhs soldiers are not clear; but so far as we gather from Sikh records, they were divided into units of varying strength and each unit was commanded by its own leader. The Sikhs, as time arose, resorted to retreats even; but only as one of the tactics of the broad strategy. The renowned warriors of the army of the Guru were Bhai Jeta, Nihalu, Tilok, Anant and Niral, Nand, Pirag, Bhir, and Bhikhan, Bidhi Chand Singha, Bhai Jati Mal, Gulab, Gokal, Babek and Painda Khan. The seven thousand Moghul soldiers had their supreme command in Mukhlis Khan, and were divided into units, each to be commanded by its own commanders. Shams Khan, Anwar Khan, Sayyad Mohammad Ali, Sultan Beg were some of the brave Muslim soldiers in the army of Mukhlis Khan.

Both sides fought valiantly and with determination. Many brave soldiers perished in the battlefield but at long last, with Mukhlis Khan's head clift in twain by the blow of Guru, the Moghul pressure decreased and they retraced their steps to Lahore. After nine hours of fighting the Guru's victory was complete. The Guru went to inspect the field of the battle and visited Lohgarh. He collected all the corpses, wrapped them in shrouds and cremated them.

I.B. Bannerjee's wrong conclusion

Dr. I.B. Bannerjee does not agree with the conclusion that the 'Guru came out victorious in this battle. He, in his support, quotes from Mohsan Fani's book "Dabistan-i-Mazahib" that the baggage and property of the Guru was plundered. Moreover, in order to lend additional strength to his stand, he subjects the clear-cut facts to new interpretation. He says "It is stated that the Sikh detachment at Lohgarh (something of a fortress outside the city of Amritsar) was too small to cope with the invaders. The Mohammedans made short work of them and took possession of the Guru's palace. As the coming day had been fixed for the marriage of the Guru's daughter, Viro, sweets had been stored in the house for the marriage feast, the Mohammedans gorged themselves to repletion and surfeited by the Guru's sweets could not help sleeping when they were surprised by the Guru's men and entirely routed, Mokhlis Khan himself being killed in the fray. It is needless to discuss the merits of the story. Suffice it to say that clearly the Guru's house was plundered by the Mohammedans on this occasion

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and that his so-called victory could not prevent his hasty retreat from Amritsar.'[1]

We have examined the Sikh accounts carefully and we have reached the following conclusions:—

(1) That the Guru's house was certainly plundered on the first day of the war.

(2) That Mukhlis Khan was killed and the Guru had an upper hand in the battle on the second or the last day of the war.

Thus Dr. Bannerjee's version as given above, is to read the Sikh tradition in parts. Nowhere does the Sikh account connect the plunder of Guru's property with the death of Mukhlis Khan. In fact Mohsan Fani's remarks refer to events of the first day. A question can legitimately be put as to why Mohsan Fani's account does not make mention of the victory attained by the Guru—especially when Mohsan Fani seems to be a great admirer of the Guru. Possibly Mohsan Fani did not regard Guru's victory a decisive one which certainly it was not because the Moghul Government had not yielded to the Guru nor did it feel frightened in any way,rather it was piqued to take action against the Guru with redoubled vigour. The battle though not important from the military view-point because neither party showed any military acumen, it was undoubtedly significant in the history of the Punjab. Apart from the fact that it was the first combat in the annals of the Punjab which was fought between the Great Moghuls and the Sikhs, it epitomised the consummation of the efforts of the Guru to lend militancy to the Sikh movement so as to enable it to stand against all types to oppression. Moreover, this battle broke the spell of the invincible might of the ruling Moghul Government. Besides this, it made explicit the hitherto implicit aspect of Sikh ideology that the oppressors should be given hot welcome. Sir J.N. Sarkar writes: "Many men came to enlist under the Guru's banner. They said that none else had power to contend with the Emperor.[2]"

Importance of the battle

The success, however, did not elate the Guru with pride. As he was fully aware of the strength and resources of Shah Jahan, he retired to the semi-desert waste-lands of Bhatinda, but another tussel with the Imperial forces began, this time over the possession of two horses. Guru's fondness for horses

Guru retired to Malwa

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1. I.B. Bannerjee : Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. II.
2. J.N. Sarkar : A Short History of Aurangzeb, p. 156.

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Another tussel between the Guru & the Moghals

and the almost incurable habit of the officials to seize these whenever, one of a good breed and fleetness could be found, involved him in conflict with the Government. It is said that two Masands named Bakht Mal and Tara Chand had brought two beautiful horses for the Guru. They were seized on the way by a Moghul official and sent to the royal stable at Lahore.

Seizure of horses

The seizure of the horses by the officials was taken very seriously by the Sikhs who regarded this as a challenge to their ideology which was very deer to them. It was against this background that Bidhi Chand was determined to recover the horses at all costs. The task was, no doubt, difficult, but still more difficult was to compromise with the wanton high-handedness of the Moghal officials. Some writers have narrated the story of the recovery of the horses in such a way that Bidhi Chand seemed to have been motivated by his marauding instinct, but this conclusion is preposterous.

Bidhi Chand's resolve to recover the horses

Bidhi Chand, went to Lahore to achieve his mission of recovering the horses. He contacted Jiwan, who was Sikh by faith and carpenter by profession and was equally interested in getting the horses back. Jiwan provided him a *Khurpa*, an iron instrument for grubbing up grass and Bidhi Chand posed as a grass-cutter. Soon, he gained access to Sondha Khan, the stable-keeper and so managed that he was appointed grass-cutter to the Emperor's favourite steed at a wage of one rupee per day. Bidhi Chand worked as much for some days during which he won over the admiration of the officials and his equals alike. One night finding the official watchmen lying in Bacchanalian slumber, he placed the saddle on Dilbag and whipped him. The horse which had never previously been struck even by the stalk of a flower, on receiving a cut with the whip, roused himself at the unsual summons, gathered his strength, set his limbs and on Bidhi Chand lifting the reins cleared without hesitation the high battlement with a bound and plunged with his rider into the river. Bidhi Chand well-skilled in horsemanship, steadied the animal in the water and guided him safely to shore and then to Bhai Rupa where Guru resided at that time. In the morning when Sondha Khan came to know of the missing of one of the favourite two steeds of the Emperor felt much perturbed. The trackers were sent all around, but no clue could be found.

But Bidhi Chand was not fully satisfied. He resolved to recover the second horse also, this time, the additional factor was the compassion for Dilbagh who, it was thought, would not be able to survive the pangs of separation for this companion, Gulbagh. Accordingly, he went to Lahore and declared that he was an experienced tracker and astrologer and could trace any

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thing that had been lost. Soon, he attracted the attention of the stable-keeper who entreated him to locate where the horse was. Bidhi Chand, who passed himself under the pseudo name of Ganak very cleverly got ingress in the fort. Accordingly to Sikh tradition Bidhi Chand was presented to the Emperor and told him that he had the skill to interpret omens, discover tracks, and read the stars and planets. The Emperor promised him lakhs of rupees if he pointed out where the stolen horse was concealed. Bidhi Chand, holding magician's chain, put his hand on the ground and raised it three times to his forehead. He then ostentatiously bowed to his supposed patron saint and preceptor. He began to count by the aid of the thumb the joints of his fingers so that all might think, he was interpreting omens. He then said to the Emperor "I know where the horse is, but I want to have one look at the place whence he was stolen, and then I will give them all information. I will tell thee the chief's name and how he effected the theft. It is then for thyself to consider whether thou canst recover the animal peaceably or go to war for him."

Upon this, the Emperor, the stable-keeper, Bidhi Chand and a few others went to the stable. Some tried to dissuade the Emperor from trusting the stranger, but the advice was disregarded.

When the Emperor, in reply to Bidhi Chand, said that the horse which had been stolen had his saddle on, Bidhi said that, if it had been otherwise, he could by the calculation he had already made discover the tracks. If, however, the remaining horses were saddled and bridled, he could consider what could be done without the delay which would be necessary to recast his calculations.

Bidhi Chand's suggestion was adopted. Bidhi Chand, assured the Emperor for information regarding the horse by the morning. The impatient Emperor pressed Bidhi Chand not to wait till morning and in consonance with the desire of him, ordered that perfect solitude and tranquility might be maintained and to this effect caused all the inhabitants to close the doors and go to sleep and put embargo on the ingress and egress of the inhabitants of the fort. In this way when everybody had retired to rest, Bidhi Chand undid the ropes that tethered the horse to the peg and galloped it to Bhai Rupa where the Guru lay encamped. It is said that Bidhi Chand, on the eve of his flight to his Guru, thundered aloud :—

"Hear everything, consider not the thief a person to be forgotten. Thy father, by the power of his army, formerly took possession of an excellent horse, intended for the holy and

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worshipful Guru Hargobind, whose fame is like that of the sun and thou hast now in imitation of the unjust father seized these noble steeds specially intended by pious Sikhs for their beloved Guru. I have made reprisal and taken the first horse by my ingenuity. My name is Bidhi Chand, I am Guru's servant. It was I who took home Dilbagh the horse thou art in search of. On account of separation from his mate, he wept copiously on his arrival, and we could only induce him to eat and drink with difficulty. Wherefore, in the guise of a tracker and with love for dumb animals, I have come to take his companion to join him. I am the thief, the true king is my master. Thou hast now given me Gulbagh ready saddled. I have thoroughly gauged the wisdom of thy court. I will tell where the horse is, and in so doing remove all the blame from myself. The Guru hath pitched his tent in the new village of Bhai Rupa. Know that Dilbagh is standing there. Gulbagh shall now go to join him."

According to Sikh chronicler, Dilbagh and Gulbagh were renamed as Jan Bhai—as dear as life and Suhela—dear companion respectively.

Obviously, the Sikh tradition is partial. It seems to have preserved the exaggerated account of the way the horses were recovered. Certainly Shah Jahan did not meet Bidhi Chand.

At best, the services of Bidhi Chand were requisitioned by certain officials connected with the royal stable at Lahore. However, some of the things implicit in the tradition—such as the daring of Bidhi Chand, the penchant concern of the Sikhs to recover the horses and the focalised notice, the Sikh Movement had taken of the high-handedness of the Government, are undoubtedly historical.

Battle of Lehra

At this, the Emperor got inflamed. Military requisitioned were, therefore, made on a large scale and the command of the Mughal forces was entrusted to Qamar Beg and Lala Beg. The royal forces moved towards the barren country of Bhatinda to chastise the Guru. It seems that the Guru had an inkling of the Mughal designs. Accordingly, he had chosen strategically sound ground at Lehra Beg on Bhatinda-Barnala road. The Guru had three thousand soldiers plus one thousand men under the command of Rai Jodh. He had stored necessary provisions for the army and established control over the solitary well at that place. The place was not connected with any city worth the name, to provide rations and other requirements of war to

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get some help from the chaudharies who were under his influence or harboured dislike in their hearts for the Mughal Government. The stationing of troops was so designed that it was not easy for the Mughal forces to gain access to water in particular. The climate of Bhatinda was also insalubrious for the Mughal army. No wonder, when both the forces met each other in A.D. 1634 (17th Poh, 1691) at the place cited above, the Guru had not much difficulty in beating his adversaries. The Mughal commanders were slain in the combat and remnant of the army rushed back to Lahore. More than 1200 Sikhs were killed or wounded. Casualties on the other side including those of the commanders were much more numerous. The Guru to commemorate his victory built a tank called Guru Sar on the spot. It lies near the village of Nathana about three miles from Rampura Phul railway station. The bravery shown by Jati Mal, Bidhi Chand and Rai Jodh during the battle was highly admired by the Guru.[1]

Victory of the Sikhs

Mohammad Latif, commenting upon the factors which led to the defeat of the Mughal armies says "Lack of provision and the difficulties of the march had a disastrous effect on the Mughal forces. They were reduced to great straits and being defeated by the Sikhs fled to Lahore, leaving its commanders slain in the battlefield."

After this, the Guru went for a repose at Kangar and soon turned to Kartarpur. Soon after, war again broke out between the Sikhs and the Mughals. This time the cause was Painda Khan,[2] the Afghan ex-general of the Sikh troops who had been dismissed on account of his haughty demeanour. He went over to the Emperor[3] and induced him to despatch a strong force against the Guru. Another expedition was sent against the Guru, under the command of Kale Khan, the brother of Mukhlis Khan who had been killed in the battle of Amritsar. He was assisted by Painda Khan and Qutab Khan, the faujdar of Jullundur. The Guru was besieged in Kartarpur in 1635.[4] The Sikhs bore the brunt of the attack under the able command of Bidhi Chand, and Baba Gurditta, the eldest

The Guru went to Kangar

Painda Khan

Battle of Kartarpur

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1. Dr. Fauja Singh : Chronology of the Battles of Guru Hargobind, Punjab History Conference Proceedings, p. 136.
2. Painda Khan was the son of the nurse of Guru Hargobind and the Guru had ever been liberal to his foster brother.
3. Probably the provincial governor.
4. Dr. Fauja Singh : Chronology of the Battles of Guru Hargobind, Punjab History Conference Proceedings, 1971, Punjabi University, Patiala.

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son of the Guru. Even Guru Tegh Bahadur who was about 14 years old, is said to have shown feats of valour in war. As the battle was going on, a man rushed with his sword upon the Guru and weilded it against him. The Guru, however, parried it and with another stroke severed his head saying, "Not so, but thus, is the sword used." In a hand to hand fight, Painda Khan fell upon his master Guru Hargobind, but receiving a mortal blow fell at the latter's feet. The Guru cried, "You are a Musalman. Now is the time for you to repeat your Kalma" Painda Khan repenting replied, 'O Guru, Thy sword is in my creed and my source of salvation'. The Guru, seeing his former favourite dying was moved to pity. It is said that he shaded him with his shield from the scorching rays of the sun and with tears rolling down his eyes bade him final farewell.[1]

Death of Painda Khan

Defeat of the Imperial Army

Painda Khan's death was followed by that of Kale Khan and consequent upon it, the Imperial army was disheartened and a general stampede followed. Mohsan Fani also seems to corroborate the Sikh chroniclers because he too says that on this occasion, Mir Baderatt and Painda Khan found their death.[2] We however, do not know who this Baderatt was; most probably he was an imperial officer who had accompanied the expedition but there is no doubt that Mohsan Fani's Painda Khan is the same person whom we discussed above.

Guru Hargobind had won four battles and through these effected a great change in the character of the Sikhs who, side by side their rosaries, buckled on the sword in defence of their faith. The fighting spirit of the Sikhs having been roused and their mettle proved, they became a power to be reckoned with. Hargobind was looked upon by the Sikhs not only a divine messenger but as an accomplished swordsman, a hero, and a thorough master of the war.

But what did Guru aim at by doing all this ? Since Guru's purpose had always been defensive, he did not acquire even an inch of territory as a result of these victories. There was something far significant involved in this warfare than mere dispute over a hawk or a horse. A new heroism was rising in the land of which the object then dimly seen was to create the will to resist the mighty power of the Mughal Government who had embarked upon the policy of religious discrimination vis-a-vis the non-Muslims.

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1. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, Vol. IV. p. 209.
2. Dabistan. Vol. II, p. 275.

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Battle of Phagwara

The Guru retired from the war at Kartarpur to Bhagwaratt and because, there, in the vicinity of Lahore, he met with difficulties he betook himself thence in haste to Geractpur (Kiratpur), which lies in the mountainous district of the Punjab.[1] The Sikh records also state that after the battle of Kartarpur which is said to have taken place in 1635, the Guru left the place and in the course of his journey reached Bhagwaratt (Phagwara). As the town was on the road to Lahore, whence reinforcement could easily be sent against him, he continued his march to Kiratpur. Near Phagwara in the village of Palahi a contingent of royal forces made a sudden and unexpected attack on the Guru under the command of Ahmad Khan, the son of late Ahdallatt Khan and inflicted considerable loss on the Guru's soldiers. In this battle, Bhai Dasa and Sohela, sons of Balu Bhat, grandsons of Mula Bhat fell martyrs.[2] This battle was fought on Ist of Jeth BK. 1692 (A.D. 1635)[3].

Guru's Activities at Kiratpur

Three factors

After this, the Guru proceeded to Kiratpur and continued to stay there till his death. Why did the Guru proceed to Kiratpur, a city in the foothill of the Himalayas. Three factors seem to have affected the decision of the Guru. Firstly, the Guru was shrewd enough to see that his limited means would not last long being no match, in the long run, to well-nigh inexhaustible resources of the Moghul Emperor and he beat his retreat to Kiratpur, which was not so easily accessible during those days of undeveloped and scanty means of transportation and communication and secondly the constant pressure which the Moghuls exerted on the rising power of the Sikhs, brought to a virtual standstill the work of religious propaganda and accordingly, he decided to give some respite to the hitherto neglected job of proselytisation. Thirdly since some of the Rajput Hill Rajas were great admirers of the Guru because he was instrumental in getting them released from the fort of Gwalior and some of them had developed veneration for

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1. Mohsan Fani : Dabistan, Vol. II, p. 275.
2. Dr. Fauja Singh : Chronology of the Battles of Guru Hargobind, Punjab History Conference Proceedings, 1971, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 136.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

   Bhai Vahi Multani Sindhi preserved in the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.
   Macauliffe fixes A.D. 1628 for the Battle of Amritsar, A.D. 1631 for the Battle of Lahira, and A.D. 1634 for the Battle of Kartarpur. These dates were accepted to be correct by later writers such as Dr. Ganda Singh, Dr. I.B. Bannerjee, etc. We have based our inferences on Bhatvahis (Bardic account) discovered.

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Sikhism and in token thereof had paid visit to Guru Amar Das, he made up his mind to make Kiratpur as a permanent residence.

Towards the middle of the year A.D. 1634, Guru Hargobind received the sad news of the death of his friend Wazir Khan at Agra. It was he who always pleaded the case of the Guru in the court and mellowed the emperor in his attitude towards the Guru. Next year, in the year A.D. 1635, he received further the sad news of the departure of the great saint, Mian Mir, for his heavenly abode. Both Wazir Khan and Mian Mir were the golden bonds bridging the gulf between the progressive and resurgent forces of Sikh faith and aggressive bigoted forces of Mughal Imperialism. Even when Mughal Imperialism was at daggers drawn with the revolutionary ideals of Sikh faith, Wazir Khan and Mian Mir established that there was eternal unity and an unbreakable spiritual and cultural bond between the true Sikhism and true Islam. The exit of both these persons from this world who were well-wishers of the Guru and his cause was sure to prove a great factor to influence the Guru to stay at Kiratpur. The Guru lived in the city from 1635 to 1644 A.D. During those days, the Guru was not disturbed by any extraneous power. Even the Mughal Emperor seemed to have been mellowed probably by Dara Shikoh.

Work of Sikh organization and proselytisation

We do not know much of Guru Hargobind's life at Kiratpur. It, however, appears that the Guru laid more emphasis on the work of Sikh organization and proselytisation. During his preoccupations with his wars, he had appointed Baba Gurditta, his eldest son to look at that. In fact, Baba Gurditta was most suitable for the job. He was a married man and a soldier; but he was also a saint and the people looked upon him as an exact image of Baba Nanak, while he was on his missionary tours. Besides this, since Baba Gurditta, by virtue of his having been adopted as his successor by Sri Chand, headed the Udasi order, which under Baba's able guidance carried out the proselytising activities with sufficient zeal. But the missionary work received a new impetus when Guru Hargobind found time to attend to. The Guru was fully aware that the masands or missionaries appointed by earlier Gurus had become corrupt, profligate and exploiters and to put new life into the preaching work, it was imperative that a fresh organization might be set up. In 1636 he asked Baba Gurditta to appoint four head preachers; Almast, Phul, Gonda, and Baba Hasna which he did investing them with his own peculiar dress in which he had symbolised himself as Guru Nanak before Pir Budhan Shah, the great simeon of Sikh History.

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All the aforesaid four preachers were assigned different areas for the preaching of Sikh religion. Almast was made as the Chief Organiser of the proselytising activities in East India and it is to his credit that he did commendable work and raised temples in commemoration of the visit of Guru Nanak at different places. Baba Hasna who was the younger brother of Almast established himself among the people of Pothohar, Kashmir. Chhachh and Hazara. Similarly Phul and Gonda were assigned the area of Doab to carry on the proselytising work. All these four Udasis founded in their allotted areas, preaching centres which were named as Dhuans or Hearths, symbolise the flame of Sikhism.

Besides this, the Guru sent Bidhi Chand to Bengal and Bhai Gurdas to Kabul and then to Benaras to enlighten the people on Guru's Gospel and also to encourage them in trade in horses. It speaks for an all-round development of Sikh character that a warrior at such a short notice could be sent out as a missionary, and a scholar as a trader. In the course of time many other similar centres of missionary work, called Bakhshishs or Bounties, were instituted by Guru Har Rai, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. Suthra Shah, a great humorist, had also a commission to carry on the mission of Guru Nanak in his own way. A question may be asked as to how Udasis could propagate Sikhism whose canons did not fit in their ideology of renunciation. The answer can be found in various developments of Udasism. Guru Ram Das had mellowed Baba Sri Chand considerably and it appears that with the passage of time, the soundness of the Sikh Guru's stand which became more visible, affected Sri Chand deeply and man of conscience as he was, he decided to wind up his business and lend helping hand to strengthen the movement as set afloat by the Gurus. During his wanderings, he happened to come face to face with Guru Hargobind probably in 1629. He asked Guru Hargobind to give him one of his sons for adoption. The Guru gave him Gurditta who got Sri Chand's mitre and necklace. The words of Sri Chand addressed to the Guru on that occasion were: 'The Guruship was already with you. I had only the Fakir's mitre and now that too is given over to your family". This event instead of laying the foundation of a new Schism marks the closing scene of reconciliation between the two estranged families and confirms the unity of Sikh organisation for which the previous Gurus had worked so hard. Henceforward, Udasis ceased to be a separate creed, and they placed their services at the disposal of the Guru to be used any way he liked. Since they, by virture of their training, could reduce their demands to the minimum, they proved an ideal preachers. They undoubtedly did not preach Udasism but they certainly preached with

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stoic indifference to handicaps which were the natural concommitants of the task.

The Guru's arrangement worked nicely and produced remarkable results. The Guru acquired a great influence over the hill people and the Rajas alike. The Sikh chroniclers state that in the days of Guru Amar Das, the Raja of Haripur had accepted Sikhism, and that the Hill Rajas of Kulu, Suket, Haripur and Chamba visited Guru Arjan Dev and became his followers as the Raja of Mandi had previously done. Similarly Guru Hargobind is said to have converted the Rajas of Kangra and Pilibhit. The Guru's religious propaganda was gaining ground among the people also. In this connection Mohsan Fani narrates an interesting story. A Sikh called Bhairo cut off the nose of the Goddess at Naina Devi, nearly ten miles distant from Kiratpur. This was reported to the neighbouring Raja, who lodged a complained with the Guru regarding the outrage. Bhairo was summoned, he would admit the charge, if the goddess herself attested it. One of the Raja's councillor's said in reply, "O blockhead, how can the Goddess speak"? Bhairo smiled and said, "We now know who the blockhead is. If the Goddess cannot repel her assailment and give evidence against him, how can you hope for any advantage from her."[1] Bhairo's answer is said to have had a tremendous effect and

Guru's fame

Mohsan Fani says that "from this time the disciples of the Guru increased considerably, and in this mountanous country as far as the frontiers of Tibet and Khota, the name of Musalman was not heard."[2] Subsequent events, however, give us a wholly different picture because the Hill Rajas remained to the last the most implacable enemies of Guru Gobind Singh and his cause. Thus it is evident that the movement in favour of Sikhism in the hill states was a temporary one and it did not survive for a long time. "However, the Guru had friendly or cordial relations with the Hill Rajas and that he had gained a considerable reputation is proved by the fact that Perrah Kaivan, Yazadani was moved by the name of the Guru and came to pay him visit as also Fazal Irani and Pir Hasan Ali from Saudi Arabia came

Meeting with Ram Das Samrath

to have the sacred glimpse of the Guru".[3] The Guru undertook occasional preaching tours in hill territories. In one of his tours, he met the great Marhatha saint Samrath Ram Das at Srinagar (Garhwal) in 1634. The saint was struck with astonishment at the sight of the Guru with two swords on his both sides, a white

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1. Dabistan-i-Mazahib.
2. Nanak Panthis : Translated from the Dabistan-i-Mazahib. Refer to Punjab, Past and Present, April 1967.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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hawk perched on his wrist and an aigrette attached to his turban. Ram Das asked the Guru, "I hear that you are the successor of Guru Nanak, Guru Nanak had renounced the world, while you wear the swords, keep horses and an army and people call you 'The True King'. What kind of a Sadhu are you ?" Hargobind replied :

> 'Saintliness within, worldliness without; Arms poor man's protection and enemy's destruction; Nanak gave up not world, He gave up worldliness.'
>
> (Batan Faqiri, Zahir Amiri, Shaster Gareeb Ki Rachhia Jarvane Ki Bhakkhia) (Punjab Sakhian, Sakhi 39).

These words found a ready response in the heart of Samrath Ram Das who spontaneouly said, "This appeals to my mind—Yeh Hamre Man Bhavti Hai".

Guru's visit to Kurukshetra

Attack of the Pathans of Ropar

During the period under review, the Guru came to the plains twice : for the first time at the time of the marriage of his son Guru Tegh Bahadur and for the second time on a preaching tour to Kurukshetra at the time of Solar Eclipse. While he was at Kurukshetra, he won over many Sanyasies and Bairagies to his cause. According to Prof. Satbir Singh, his success could partly be attributed to the acknowledgement on the part of Sri Chand that the Guru was championing the right cause. On his way back to Kiratpur, he was suddenly attacked by the Pathans of Ropar. The Guru accompanied only by 22 Sikhs took shelter in the fortress of the village named Brahman Majra. Next morning the Sikh horsemen from Kiratpur reached and the Pathans fled from the field.

No doubt, the Guru concentrated more on missionary work; but it would be a criminal folly to think that he discounted the need for the spirit of militancy to be infused into his Sikhs. According to Macauliffe, the Guru kept a stable of 700 horses and always entertained three hundred horsemen and sixty artillerymen, and if we are to believe Khazan Singh, he rendered help to Tara Chand of Hindur who had some boundary dispute with the Nawab of Ropar in 1642. As a matter of fact, the Guru never hesitated to resort to arms, of course as a last resort, for righteous cause.

The last days of the Guru's life were saddened by a series of domestic tragedies. Within a few years five members of his family, including three of his sons, died one after another.

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Bidhi Chand passed away in 1638 at Dalo Nagar. The most grievous of these deaths was that of Gurditta in A.D. 1638. To add to his sorrow, Gurditta's eldest son Dhirmal turned refractory to his grandfather. For some time, the Guru could not make up his mind about his successor. He had two sons living; Suraj Mal, who showed little interest in Sikh affairs and Tegh Bahadur who was too withdrawn in himself to be entrusted with the leadership of a rapidly growing community. After deliberating a good deal, the Guru appointed Har Rai to succeed him and himself died on March 3, 1644. According to Mohd. Latif, the Guru's death was a national calamity and the estimation in which he was held by the Sikhs, may be judged from the fact that a great many of them volunteered to burn themselves on his funeral pyre. Two of his followers, one a Rajput[1] and the other a Jat[2], jumped into the flames of the burning pyre, and continued moving round the corpse and finally fell and expired at the 'Guru's feet. Others were ready to follow the example, but were forbidden by Har Rai.[3]

GENERAL ESTIMATE OF THE GURU

Guru Hargobind emerges to be many splendoured personality, undoubtedly great and unique. The first outstanding trait of his personality seems to be his unalloyed courage and exquisite dynamism. He, from the very day of the assumption of apostleship, had to face serious challenges. The most potent challenge was from the Imperial Government. After the death of Akbar, the process of effecting emotional integration amongst different sections of the people of India came to a stop and in lieu thereof, the scheme of converting the land into 'Daru-ul-Islam' came into operation, The Mughal Government seemed to be bent upon seeing his design through and hence it was prepared to use any method it deemed fit. Guru Arjan had suffered execution because of the new trends in Mughals religious policy and Guru Hargobind also had to undergo imprisonment for two years in the fort of Gwalior.

During Shah Jahan's times, the reversion to orthodoxy on the part of Mughal state became crystal clear and it was not difficult to judge that bad days were ahead for the non-Muslims particularly in the Punjab where the Muslim Imperialists in collaboration with orthodox Muslims, especially Naqashbandis, were particularly keen to put an end to any voice of dissent.

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1. The Name of the Rajput was Raja Ram.
2. The Jat served the Guru's son in land.
3. Nanak Panthies : Translated from the Mazahib, Refer to Punjab Past and Present April, 1967, p. 68.

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Notwithstanding the trying circumstances, the Guru remained as calm as ever and with extraordinary moral and personal courage addressed himself to the task of forging a response to the challenge. The general outlines of the response were given by Guru Arjan Dev in his parting message but it was left for Guru Hargobind to prepare not only the framework but also the complete picture of it. He initiated the new policy which was new only in the sense that previous Gurus did not lay as much emphasis on it as the present Guru. The object of this policy was to inject militancy into the people who hitherto made use of rosary and had never touched the hilt of the sword. The Guru succeeded to a considerable extent in his object and the Sikhs showed remarkable courage under the over-all command of the Guru in Mughal-Sikh wars fought during Guru's time, and yet the military spirit which the Guru instilled into the Sikhs was not that of the barbarians rather it was used for the protection of the righteous cause. Guru Nanak himself had said, "It is the privilege and right of the true men to fight for, and die for righteousness." And still Guru did not rest on his oars. As the time changed, so he changed. Immediately after the end of war, he would resort to religious propaganda and during his last nine years or so of his life, he would evolve an organisation to carry on the proselytising work as an alternative to Masand system which had gone corrupt. Evidently he was a dynamic personality, quick to perceive and quicker to act.

A great organiser

The second characteristic of his personality was his organising ability. In fact, he was an organiser par excellence. He saw clearly his objects and the means to attain it. He was sure that rosary alone would not do; the Sikhs would have to wear swords also if they wanted to preserve themselves and fulfil their mission. He popularised hunting among his followers and encouraged them to take physical exercises. The singing of *vars* of heroic persons was encouraged to stir the people. The practice of chorus-singing to the accompaniment of conches and circumbulating Hari Mandir with torches in their hands was started presumably to impart martiality to the people. Lest the Guru should be misunderstood, he wore two swords; one to symbolise the spiritual and the other as a mark of temporal power. Simiiar motives prompted the Guru to build 'Akal Takht' wherefrom the temporal affairs were conducted; but it was built in front of Hari Mandir with a purpose that while talking about politics the Sikhs should not forget the lofty principles of their religion.

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He had perceptiveness of a creative genius. He had clear foresight of the circumstances and rare knack of evolving techniques to forge weapons to respond to the challenge of times. When put in Gwalior Prison, he created cordial links with the Rajput Princes of Rajasthan and Shiwalik States—the links which stood him in good stead later in his life. He kept friendly relations with the Mughals, as long as he could because he needed respite for his military preparations.

No doubt, he maintained peace with the Government as long as he could, but he had no illusion regarding the outcome of the struggle if it did come after all and he planned accordingly. He during his various tours in Majha, Doaba, Malwa, Jammu-Kashmir and North India never lost any opportunity when he did not exhort his followers that they should put up active resistence to the tyranny—political, social or religious—without giving up their interest in the Gospel. But, being endowed with rare insight and practical commonsense, he thought that any schismatic sect would harm the cause and accordingly he addressed himself with all his might to put an end to the cleavage if there was any. The Guru touched the highest watermark of statesmanship when he won over Sri Chand, the spearhead of the Udasi sect and exerted so much influence on him that he wound up his sect and advised his followers to spread the teachings of the Guru far and wide with Udasis' indifference but not as Udasis. The building of the fort of Sri Hargobindpur and his retreat to Kartarpur speak volumes of his foresight and statesmanship.

A great preacher

Notwithstanding his pre-occupation in multifarious activities, the Guru did not neglect the proselytising work. On the other hand, he was next only to the Guru Nanak so far as this work was concerned. His preaching services used to be in pithy and catchwords which had a magic effect upon the audience. He was clear in his objectives and could convey them with great ease and convenience. His conversation with Ram Das Samrath bears testimony to his knack of clinching the issue and putting it forth clearly. Similarly, his replies to the querry of Shah Daula presented a complete picture of the Sikh ideology in totality.

Besides this the Guru set up a new organisation called *Dhuan* organisation. According to it, preachers of integrity and sterling earnestness were asked to establish Dhuans a symbol of their determination to keep aloft and atop the torch of Sikhism. It is a matter of history that they spared no pains to spread Sikhism within the country and without. The Guru was convinced of the soundness of the maxim 'Example is better

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than precept' and this being so, he exhorted the preachers to preach Sikhism through practising it.

Equipoise of a *Raj Yogi*

The next trait of his character which sparkles is that he never lost equipoise and remained equable under all types of circumstances. Engaged in warfare with the Emperor of India and liable always to be attacked unawares, the Guru was never at a loss, never in haste, never afraid of results. The date of the wedding of his daughter Bibi Viro coincided with the first battle of Amritsar between the Guru and the Emperor. While the rest of the Guru's family escaped in time, his daughter Viro inadvertently remained on the upper floor of the house which, by nightfall, was ravaged by the Emperor's troops. With great difficulty, she was conveyed to the place where the rest of the family had taken refuge. While this turmoil was on, the Guru ordered that the wedding of his daughter should be duly celebrated that very night in a village of Jhabal, about seven miles from Amritsar which was accordingly done amid great rejoicings. When Painda Khan, once the trusted general of the Guru, whom the latter had brought up from boyhood as his pet cavalier, turned against him, went over to the side of Shah Jahan, and re-appeared as one of the two leaders of a hostile army, the Guru remained calm and collected. As he was chanting hymns and praying, his Sikh generals came in hot haste to inform him of the approach of the Moghul forces. The Guru said "Be calm. There is nothing to be afraid of. All comes as our creator wills". His quality of keeping equipoise even amidst the heaviest odds received added lustre when it was combined with the Guru's keen sense of humour. There are some scholars who aver that Hargobind waged a war of hatred against the Empire thus compromising his ideal of humanity which was to be at peace with all creation. But the view is erroneous. Guru's wars aimed at measuring swords with those who did not allow even life to exist.

A champion of new heroism

The Guru was not the champion of negative heroism that kills and murders, but positive heroism that dies with glad heart or as a last resort takes up arms to break the arms of the tyrants. Never in any war, even though the Sikhs were victorious, the Guru showed any spirit of revenge and acted in the barbarous manner as Changez or Timur had done long before him. On the other hand, at the close of war, the Guru would go to the field and attend to the needs of the wounded. He made proper arrangement for the disposal of the dead bodies and personally saw that the last ceremonies were performed in each case in accordance with the faith, the killed

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had lived upon. In all this is reflected the Guru's spirit embedded in the heroism the Guru had developed. Nor did Guru ever wish for any territory. As a matter of fact, he aimed at accomplishing transformation of the people so that they might be self-respecting and self-reliant.

A great general

He touched the apex of his operational wisdom. He organised his army out of scratch and developed it in such a way that within a very short span of time it became a force to be recknoned with. He fought five actions against the Moghuls and in all these, the Guru's was upper hand. Apart from organising the army, the Guru was possessed of rare capability of taking quick and correct decisions and following strategy and changing tactics according to exigencies of the situation. At Lehra, the selection of the ground, the formation and stationing of troops and conducting of war operations speak volumes of Guru's capability as a general. At Kartarpur also, the Guru's generalship contributed a lot to the victory of the Sikhs.

Personal valour

Apart from it, Guru's personal valour was also unsurpassed. In the battle of Kartarpur, a man aimed a blow of his sword at the Guru. The Guru parried the blow and with another blow struck off his head saying, "Not in that manner, but so the sword is used." Similarly Painda Khan engaged himself in a pitched duel with the Guru who, confident of his strength and military skill, provoked him to attack first. Accordingly Painda Khan aimed a sword-blow at the Guru two times, but with no result. Then the Guru dealt a single blow under which the proud Pathan fell. Yet the Guru asked his followers to shun hatred against the empire, nor did he compromise the ideals of spiritual humanity which was to be at place with all creation.

Great sense of humour

His greatest assets appear to have been his lovable personality and never-failing sense of humour, which did not desert the Guru even in the field of battle when his very life was hanging in the balance and made it easy for him to enjoy a joke at his own expense. As Mohsan Fani would have us believe, there was a Brahmin named Deva who counted himself among the wise. He visited the Guru and seated himself one day upon the bed of Baba Jev who was the son of Guru. The people said: 'Do not sit there'. He asked: 'Why not ?' They answered: 'This is the place of the Guru.' He said 'Is perhaps the figure of a Guru not that of a man, or have I not a rational soul manifest in me ?' The speech was brought to the notice of the Guru who called Deva and said, 'O Deva ! Is not the whole world but one thing ?' He replied, 'It is'. The Guru pointed an

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ass and called, 'Do you know what this is ?' Deva replied, 'You are one with God and therefore you are also this.' The Guru enjoyed the joke and smiled. Dr. I.B. Bannerjee says "These anecdotes show clearly what an equable temper, what an abundant fund of humour and what a lovable personality the Guru possessed and partially explained why he was so passionately and zealously served by a devoted band of followers through all his trials and tribulations."

MOST MIS-UNDERSTOOD GURU

Inspite of so many merits of the Guru, he appears to have been much misunderstood. No doubt, he inaugurated a policy which formed a correct response to the challenge of times, yet it is felt by some scholars that he fell short of the high ideals that had guided his predecessors. The points made against him are as under:—

1. The Guru abandoned the gentle and spiritual teaching of Nanak for the use of arms and the love of adventure.

2. His predecessors were great men of religion and composed many hymns for the guidance of their Sikhs. Guru Hargobind did not compose even a single such hymn for the pursose.

3. According to I.B. Bannerjee, it appears that many among his contemporaries came to think that the lure of politics and the glamour of arms were leading him away from the true path of a religious leader.

4. Hargobind quite changed the character of the peaceful Nanak's disciples who now laid aside their rosaries and buckled on the sword in defence of their faith.

5. The Guru recruited outlaws, renegades, plunderers, robbers and men of doubtful character in his army and gave refuge to some of the Muslims who were supposed to be the enemies of the Sikhs. The Guru was rather a mercenary soldier than a religious zealot and fought for and against the Mughals, as the prospect of gain dictated.

On analysis, it has been found that the objections raised above are lacking in solid foundations or smack of mis-understanding or incapability of grasping the full import of the policy pursued by the Guru and the challenge of which this policy was an answer to. Referring to objection No. 1, our assertion is that the Guru did not abandon the policy of the Gurus preceding him. The use of arms was never prohibited

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or made blasphemous by the earlier Gurus; only they did not make use of it and who can give guarantee that they would have not used arms, had they been called upon by the environments. The days when liberalism was in the Imperial saddle had gone with the death of Guru Arjan Dev, and with the accession of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, a new era in the religious policy had started. The non-Muslims began to be looked down upon as the non-desirables. Guru Arjan Dev had fallen victim to the parochial religious policy of Jahangir and many more Sikhs were likely to meet the fate under Shah Jahan who was certainly less liberal than Jahangir. Under the circumstances, if the power of the Government was to be used to cater to the religious whims of the Emperor blended by fanaticism or wrong notions about religions, the use of arms on the part of the Guru was, in no way, a sin. Even Guru Nanak could have not disapproved of it. Guru Nanak's "Babar Vani" amply acquaints us with the attitude of the Guru vis-a-vis sufferings. Certainly it was the attitude of putting up resistance to the prepetrators of tyranny or to the authors of sufferings. Furthermore, the epithet 'Asur Singhar' used for God by Nanak leaves us no doubt that Guru Nanak's attitude towards oppressors was that of a revolutionary. Guru Angad laid emphasis on the physical exercises, and showed firmness when he was threatened by Humayun. By the time of the third and fourth Gurus, the Sikh community had become large enough to attract the attention and also the hostility of those whose interests were affected by its rise. Guru Ram Das in his Var Gauri describes the Sikh movement of his time as an arena of opposing forces, wherein the Guru had to fight heroically against the odds. Guru Arjan too had come to talk of his struggles in terms of wrestling matches (Sri Rag). After describing the work of organisation he had effected among Sikhs he says, 'now the order of the merciful has gone forth that no one shall molest another'. And the Sikhs have been sufficiently prepared to understand what that order meant for them. Bir Bal, a minister of Akbar, imposed a capitation tax on the *khatries* of Amritsar, who led by Guru Arjan Dev refused to pay it. Birbal threatened to bring an army to punish the Guru but he was called away to the frontier where he was killed, and nothing came out of it. Thus was war averted; but it is clear from this incident that the clash which came in the time of Guru Hargobind was due much earlier; only an accident postponed it. Guru Arjan Dev, in his parting message instructed Hargobind to take resort to arms. Hence Guru Hargobind was not doing something new or deviating from the path of his predecessors by taking up arms as a last resort—rather by doing this, he was affirming his faith in the ideology as propounded and practised by the earlier Guru. In view of all this, it seems that Gorden misunderstood the character of the Sikh movemen

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under Guru Hargobind. The Sikhs did not lay rosary aside, the symbol of Bhakti. In fact, there are examples when even in the battlefields, prayers and regular services were held; but there is no doubt that the Sikhs began to yearn for Shakti (Power) with so much intensity as for Bhakti (Meditation). Why scholars of the stature of Gordon and Trumpp could not understand the Sikh movement in true colour was, perhaps, due to the fact that they could not think of any religion which regarded force to be an important adjunct of religious programme. Since it fell to the lot of the Gurus to face the Muslim ruling class in their efforts to reconstruct society on new foundation they did not deem the use of force illegitimate or improper if it made as a last resort and for a good cause. From another point of view also, the stand of the Gurus was justified. Sikhism, in Toynbee's analysis, formed a response of Hindu civilization to the challenge of Islam and was born in time of trouble of Indian civilization. There was but all justification that it should adopt the ways of Islam to meet it and there was nothing surprising if Sikhs adopted sword as necessary concommitant along with rosary.

The objection No. 2 is also hollow. It appears that Trumpp has equated quietness with the composition of verses for Guru Granth Sahib. Really a strange technique of judging ! Gautam Budha has not composed even a single line and yet he is great and so is the case of Mahavir. In view of all this how can greatness be denied to Guru Hargobind ? Moreover, to live the spirit of verses and to propagate them is a work of no less importance and certainly not contrary to the tenets as propounded by the earlier Gurus.

Referring to the objection No. 3, it may be said that lure of politics or glamour of arms never dazzled the Guru. He did take interest in developing the military instincts in his followers but never at the cost of the spiritual development of the Sikhs. In fact the Guru desired like his predecessors, that all the earthly tasks should be rooted in spiritual attainments. This may be seen queer to those who are accustomed to think of saints as mere recluses muttering *mantras*, with hands folded and eyes upturned The Sikh Guru was however cast in a different mould. He was a practical leader as also meditating saint, and thought it not inconsistent with his religious ideals to take active measure to teach service of mankind as much through advancement of trade, art and living, as through holy communion, high thinking and noble-being.

So far as objection no. 4 is concerned, that too is based on the wrong understanding of the Guru's ideals and aims. The Guru never thought in terms of Hindus and Muslims and made friends with anybody irrespective of caste, creed and birth etc.,

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provided he had the same views as of the Gurus. A Sufi saint Mian Mir fell in the first category and Anwar Khan belonged to the second category.

Moreover, it is absolutely wrong to say that plunderers or robbers comprised his army. Some one of them, as for instance, Bidhi Chand might be a dacoit or a robber before entering into the fellowship of the Sikhs but once he embraced Sikhism, he never indulged in any anti-people activities. In view of this, the Guru should be given the credit of bringing about a unique transformation of characters.

All said and done, the Guru's personality sparkles like a sun in the sky. He was atonce a great spiritual and temporal leader. Under him the Sikh movement not only streered clear through the difficulties but also progressed in all its dimensions. Bhai Gurdas has well said of him "The smasher of enemy's ranks, the brave, heroic Guru, yet a lover of mankind."

During the stormy career of thirty eight years, the Guru had carried the message of Guru Nanak from Srinagar to Pilibhit in U.P., he had sent missionaries to all the provinces of India and even to distant places like Bengal and Ceylon, and he had also made it clear to the world that worldly pursuits were quite compatible with the deeper religious spirit and highest piety, and to bear arms in defence of their homes and hearths was a paramount duty of Sikh faith. The repeated success of the Guru's army had made the Sikhs realise their own power and the weaknesses of the Mughal empire. He gave to the generations to come, freedom from fear, from superstitions, from the social and political burdens of the ages, from the shackles of tyranny and despotism, freedom from anarchy of thoughts and faiths. He gave them moral and spiritual courage, to laugh at death, to spurn tyranny and despotism, and to love and serve humanity without any prejudices of castes and creeds. He taught them how to love and respect the true Muslim, the true Hindu and the true Christian. He also taught them to face and fight the fanatic, the bigoted, the cruel and the barbaric, be he a Muslim, a Hindu or a Christian.

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Peaceful Consolidation

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Chapter 11

GURU HAR RAI and GURU HAR KRISHEN

GURU HAR RAI
(b. 1630, d. 1661)

INTRODUCTION

Guru Hargobind had five sons: Baba Gurditta (b. 1613 A.D.), Ani Rai (b. 1616 A.D.), Suraj Mal (b. 1615 A.D.), Atal Rai (b. 1619 A.D.) and Tegh Bahadur (b. 1621 A.D.). Baba Atal, Ani Rai and Gurditta died before their father. Suraj Mal being too worldly and Guru Tegh Bahadur being still not up to the mark were thought unfit for carrying the burden of Guruship. Baba Gurditta left two sons, Dhir Mal and Har Rai, but Dhir Mal could not win over his grandfather because of his arrogance and disloyalty. The Sikh records tell us that when the Guru left for Kiratpur, Dhir Mal with his mother Nathi remained behind at Kartarpur and took possession of the Guru's property as also of the priceless original copy of Adi Granth. At the death of Baba Gurditta, the Guru asked for the Holy volume so that it might be recited for the repose of Gurditta's departed soul and also invited Dhir Mal to receive a turban after his father's death in token of succession to his property and position;[1] but Dhir Mal who had some influence in the court of Aurangzeb and was in communication with the Guru's enemies paid no heed to the proposal. As a matter of fact, he was under the delusion that as long as he kept the sacred volume in his possession, the Sikhs would look upon him as their religious leader and it mattered little if the Guru nominated him or not. In view of all this, Guru Hargobind nominated Har Rai, the younger brother of Dhir Mal as his successor and himself departed for heavenly abode on March 3, 1644.

Guru Har Rai's seventeen years of ministry although not marked by any spectacular events, yet were not insignificant. The Sikhs had just passed through a stormy career and it was natural that a pause should be effected. Moreover, two additional reasons strengthened the cause of peace: "One was the natural disposition of Har Rai who was endowed with a peace-loving nature and reflective mind." No doubt, he had inherited militant tradition and a small army, but he was essentially a

1. Macauliffe. *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 222.

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man of peace. He loved to hunt but only to bring back wild animals for his private zoo at Kiratpur. He hated to hurt any living thing. "You can repair or rebuild a temple or a mosque but not a broken heart", he said. Secondly, it was not an easy thing to resort to arms under the iron rule of Aurangzeb who was ruthless in dealing with his enemies.

Yet the Guru was not passive; his was the policy of masterly inactivity. In fact he required peace and time to accomplish the work of peaceful organization and arrest disintegration which had set in because of the corruption of Masands and dissentient sects of Dhirmalyas and Himdalyas.

The Guru did not revise the policy of his father, he only took precautions to avoid any intermeddling with politics. According to Khazan Singh 'the military spirit of the Sikhs which was fostered during the time of Guru Hargobind continued to flourish' and circumstances were not wanting when he took resort to arms. In 1656, when from his tour of Malwa and Doaba the Guru was coming back to Goindwal, Mohammad Yarbeg Khan (son of Mukhlas Khan who was killed by Guru Hargobind in the battle) who chanced to be on the way with 1000 men attacked unawares the baggage and the ladies who were following the Guru at some distance. The Guru knew nothing of the attack but the escort defended themselves admirably and drove the enemy away with considerable loss. Bhai Garro, the son of Bhai Bhagtu (whose descendants, later on, ruled Kaithal State) who was eagerly looking forward to some opportunity to win over the Guru whom he had displeased by putting to sword a devoted Sikh of the Guru showed extraordinary courage and knack in this encounter and the Guru having been joyed, rewarded him The Raja of Kahlur was also shown his place when he picked up quarrel with the Guru.

PEACEFUL CONSOLIDATION

The Guru's task of consolidation was not all smooth-sailing. It was beset with great difficulties. Firstly, the masands whose primary function was to spread Sikh faith had gone corrupt, immoral and recalcitrant. Secondly, the Government of the day had turned hostile. The continued absence of the Guru from Amritsar, Goindwal, Khadur Sahib and Kartarpur gave rise to various misgivings and this thing seriously precluded the advancement of the Sikh community. The hostility of the disappointed claimants was also a factor in impeding the progress. The Minas headed by Harji were also throwing a challenge. Har Mandir had fallen to their control and several Masands had joined them. The tradition which was started by Guru was to be developed to its logical end whereby the Sikhs

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should develop spiritually and militarily at one and the same time. Guru Arjan Dev had practically completed the organisation of his followers on peaceful lines and under Guru Hargobind, Sikhism had added into itself an army, however weak or small it might have been. No doubt, the consummation was still more than half a century off, but in the intervening period steps had to be taken.

In the light of the above facts, it is obvious that the situation was well-nigh desperate yet the Guru, notwithstanding the hazards involved in the situation, exerted hard to cope with the challenge of circumstances. Apart from laying emphasis on the free kitchen and religious congregation and faith in Adi Granth, he undertook extensive tours in Malwa and Doaba regions of the Punjab. From this, it appears that his proselytising activities were mainly confined to the aforesaid territories. Three reasons can be attributed to it: Firstly Majha region was not safe for him because of the proximity of Lahore where the high Government officials were harbouring displeasure for the Guru and his cause on account of Guru Hargobind's supremacy over them in different wars. Secondly the Muslims who formed a large majority of the population in this region had started looking askance at the Sikhs. Lastly Malwa and Doaba regions provided good ground for the activities of the Guru to sprout. The Malwa region being semi-desert and unproductive, it was neither in the tight grip of the Muslim rule nor had attracted the attention of the proselytising activities of the Muslim missionaries. Similarly, Doaba region was only partially committed to the Muslim faith. It is to the credit of Guru Har Rai that he made some notable conversions among the landed families of the Punjab who were, at that time, considered the natural leaders of the people.

Guru Har Rai's Tours in Malwa

Guru Har Rai travelled in different parts of the country. He moved in Doaba region of the Punjab and in token thereof, planted bamboo tree in the village named Mukandpur. Therefrom the Guru proceeded to the Malwa region where two brothers, Kala and Karam Chand of Maharaj tribe waited on him and complained. Owing to the hostility of the Kaura tribe they were finding it difficult to secure suitable place of habitation. The Guru tried to settle the matter amicably but when that failed he helped the Mahraj brothers to take forcible possession of a piece of land and settle there with tribesmen. After this, the Guru took up his residence at a place called Nathana. There Kala visited the Guru off and on, and on one occasion, took his nephews, Sandli and Phul, whose father, during the time of Guru Hargobind was killed in a battle. Phul who was then

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five years old struck with his hands, at the instance of his uncle, his own naked belly like a drum in front of the Guru. When asked why he did so, Kala explained that he was hungry and wanted something to eat. The Guru took compassion on him and said, "He shall become great, famous and wealthy. The steeds of his descendants shall drink water as far as Jamna; they shall have sovereignty for many generations and be honoured in proportion as they serve the Guru." This may very well be a prophecy ex-eventual but at the same time, it seems clear that the obscure Phul first came into prominence under the patronage of Guru Har Rai and this laid the foundation of future greatness of his family.[1] Phul had six sons, from the eldest of whom namely Tilok Singh, the Rajas of Nabha and Jind descended and Phul's second son Ram Singh bore the Maharaja of Patiala. These three were known as Phul ke-Raja, or Rajas of Phulkian States.

Having received blessings of Guru, Chaudhri Kala returned home and related the story to his wife. She rebuked him because it would not benefit him or his progeny and remarked that if Phul's descendants became rulers of the country, it would be better to be lorded over by Mohammedans than their own agnates (Shāriks). She advised him to get some blessings in his own favour. He therefore, appeared again before the Guru with his own sons. The Guru said that the lot of Phuls decendants was unalterable whereras Chaudhri's descendants would enjoy free grants of land. In the case of Kala's descendants also the prophecy came out to be true and they happened to be big jagirdars.

The ancestors of two other notable families of Bhais of Kaithal and Bagrian whose descendants played a distinguished role in the building of Sikh power are said to have owed their greatness to the Guru.

According to Giani Garja Singh, Guru Har Rai, just after the death of Dara Shikoh reached Sri Nagar via Glolian, Sialkot in A.D. 1660[2] and stayed in the Hap Bazaar, Sri Nagar. Mata Saraswti, the sister of Bhai Pera and Pairaga did her best to make the Guru's stay comfortable. Sarvshri Aru, Sewa Das, Naik Das, Darga Chand and Suthra Shah were the important priests of the Guru's times who did missionary work in Kashmir.

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1. I.B. Bannerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, p. 49.
2. The information has been gathered from Garja Singh's note in the File No. 4, concerning Bhat Vahi.

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Raising a new organisation

But his most striking achievement in the sphere of proselytization was the raising of a new organisation. The Guru, having been convinced of the deterioration of the Masand system, evolved Bakhshishs or the missionary centres which were six in number and were manned by Suthrashah, Sahiba, Sangata, Mihan Sahib, Bhagt Bhagwan, Bhagat Mal, and Jeet Mal. Bhagat Gir originally a Bairagi was converted to Sikhism along with his followers. He was renamed Bhagat Bhagwan and appointed as the incharge of the preaching work in the East, where he along with his followers established as many as 360 gaddies (centres) to carry on the propaganda work. Another centre was established in the central districts of the Punjab. Bhai families of Kaithal and Bagrian were made responsible for missionary work in the land between the Jamna and the Sutlej. Bhai Pheru was acting as the Guru's Masand in the Lamma region between the Beas and Ravi. As the masands or missionaries appointed by the earlier Gurus became more and more corrupt, this new order of preachers attained more prominence and was specially useful in spreading Sikhism in far distant and difficult places.

The Guru, the Moghul Emperors and Ram Rai

From the perusal of Sikh records, it appears that Guru Har Rai's relations with the Moghul Emperor had improved and both sides were friendly towards each other. It is said that Aurangzeb, who was very cunning, clever and ambitious, administered whiskers of a tiger in a dainty dish to his elder brother Dara who became dangerously ill in consequence.[1] The best physicians were consulted but without avail. Then some one suggested to Shah Jahan, the father of Dara, that if a chebulic myrobalam weighing fourteen *chhatanks*[2] and a clove weighing one masha could be produced and administered to the patient, he would be restored to health. These things were said to be available with the Guru. The Emperor sent a letter to the Guru which was delivered to him at Kiratpur. The Guru willingly obliged the Emperor by giving him the required medicine. The medicine was administered which affected a speedy and complete cure, and the Emperor was naturally pleased, forgot all his enmity to the Guru and vowed that he would never again cause him annoyance.

At that juncture, some one asked the Guru why he had saved the life of a son of Shah Jahan, who had tormented his father and grandfather. The Guru replied, "the man breaks

1. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, pp. 278-9.
2. One chhatank is equal to five tolas.

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flowers with one hand, offers them with the other, but the flowers perfume both the hands alike. The axe cuts the sandal tree, yet the sandal perfumes the axe. The Guru ought, therefore, to return good for evil."[1]

Dara became highly respectful towards the Guru partly because of Guru's provision of the medicine which effected his recovery and partly because of the views of the Guru which bore close similarity to those of his own.

In 1656, war of succession started among Shah Jahan's sons. The Guru's sympathies were naturally more with the liberal Dara Shikoh than with the bigoted Aurangzeb. Dara was defeated and fled northward to the Punjab. He called on the Guru and asked for assistance. The manner of the assistance given by the Guru to Dara Shikoh is not clear. According to Trumpp the Guru actually joined Dara with his Sikhs. Sarkar and Cunningham assert that the Guru covered his retreat by blocking Aurangzeb's troops on the Beas. Sujan Rai in his Khulasat-ut-Twarikh states, "Having been defeated, Dara Shikoh rushed to Lahore where the impending designs of his brother gravely terrified him and accordingly he decided to flee to Multan and Qandhar. He confided his intentions to his associates. Rajah Rajrup exclaimed that he would go home to improve arrangements for mustering troops and leaving his son and emissary at Lahore he departed. A few days later, the son and the emissary followed suit. Guru Har Rai, who had come with large army, left his camp with the assurance that he would collect more troops for him." The evidence embodied in epitaphic inscription of Ram Rai's monument at Dehra Dun also confirms the view that the Guru rendered assistance to Dara. Dara Shikoh fled from Lahore on the 18th August, 1658. On the next day Aurangzeb took possession of Lahore as a strategic measure. Guru Har Rai retired to village Galoti (District Sialkot). When returned he proceeded back to Kiratpur. A shrine in village Galoti still commemorates Guru Hari Rai's stay in village Galoti during the rainy season of the year 1659.

Having made his position secure on the throne of Delhi, Aurangzeb embarked upon his wretched enterprise of religious crusade against the Hindus. Prompted partly by that crusade and partly by the spirit of wreaking vengeance on the Guru for his rendering help to Dara, Aurangzeb summoned the Guru Har Rai to his presence. The Guru foreseeing the Emperor's intentions submitted on 7th Baisakh 1717 (1660 A.D.) a mild

1. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, p. 279.

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petition to him representing that he was a mere faqir and that he had no business at the Imperial Court and hoped that his presence would be excused. Ram Rai, the eldest son of the Guru, took this letter to Aurangzeb who felt satisfied on its receipt and was highly pleased with the conversation, he had with Ram Rai whom he kept at his court for a long period and treated him with marked distinction granting Rs. 500 per day for his public kitchen.

Ram Rai had strict injunctions from his father to be true to his faith and never to deviate from it whatever the circumstances might be; but he, being a very clever and ambitious youngman soon began to carry favour with the Emperor by acting in a manner that was hardly in line with the instructions that he had received from his father and was highly derogatory to the dignity of the Guru's house. Not only did he perform several miracles and earn a name at Delhi as a Thaumaturge but also he felt no qualms in distorting a verse of Guru Nanak in order to please the Emperor. The story runs that Ram Rai was asked to explain a passage in the Adi Granth which was considered offensive to Muslims. It ran:—

> 'The Ashes of the Mohammadan fall into the potter's clod:
>
> Vessels and bricks are fashioned from them; they cry out as they burn.'

Ram Rai understood what offended the Muslims and very cleverly replied that the text had been needlessly corrupted by ignorant persons and the word Musalman inserted in place of the word *Baiman* (dishonest) or faithless. By doing so, Ram Rai succeeded in satisfying the Emperor and other Sunni Ulemas; but when the report of the fact reached the Guru, he was exasperated with anger and remarked that no mortal could change the sayings of Guru Nanak and that "the mouth which had dared to do so should never be seen by him." He was charged with falsehood and dis-inherited with a perpetual injunction that no true Sikh should, on pain of ex-communication from Sikhism, maintain any intercourse with him or his progeny "The Guruship", said he (Guru), "is like a tigress's milk which can only be contained in a golden cup. Only he who is ready to devote his life thereto is worthy of it."

Sayad Muhammad Latif, the author of the History of the Punjab (1889) obviously taking cue from Cunningham's 'A History of the Sikhs (1849), states that Guru Har Rai did not like Ram Rai on account of the latter's "independence of character." He adds that Ram Rai being in the habit of making his own disciples, his father invariably made it a rule to speak of

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Har Krishan, his younger son, in public, as apostalic successor, though at the time he was a minor about six years age."

Ram Rai, however, begged forgiveness and personally called upon his father at Kiratpur; he even requested his uncle Dhir Mal to intercede on his behalf but the Guru did not grant pardon. Even the request for the interview was rejected with the remarks that he should instantaneously leave Kiratpur for any direction he willed and the pontification was entrusted to his younger son Har Krishan, to the exclusion of the elder son, Ram Rai. As a sequel to it, Ram Rai turned hostile to him and the central church in due course of time, like his uncle Dhir Mal, founded a rival sect and made common cause with the Moghul authorities in a bid to disrupt the Sikh authority.[1]

The Guru died on October 6, 1661. It is an irony that the Sikh records do not mention any physical reason that might be appertained to the Guru's early end. Shri Ajit Singh Bagha,[2] basing his conclusions on the authority of some Tibetan source combined with the indirect inferences from the text of the epitaphic inscriptions in the premises of Ram Rai's monument at Dehra Dun, however, says that poison was got administered to the Guru at the instance of the Emperor Aurangzeb who nursed a grudge against the former for his having aided Dara Shikoh in the struggle for succession. The evil deed was performed with the vicious aid of nefarious intriguer, Ram Rai. The question naturally arises as to why Ram Rai acted as an instrument of the Emperor. We feel that in this perfidious act, he wanted to ensure the help of the Moghul Emperor which combined with the support of quite a large number of masands which he had already enlisted, seemed to him sufficient to boost his claim to the apostalic seat.

GURU HAR KRISHAN

(b. A.D. 1656, d. A.D. 1664)

As mentioned in the last chapter, Har Krishan succeeded to the apostleship in A.D. 1661 at the age of about 5 years. Though a mere child, he possessed high attainments and justified the selection. "He did his work well, he sent out missionaries to the farthest out posts of the religion and himself taught with all confidence those who asked him of truth".[3] When the news of his succession reached Ram Rai, he was inflamed with

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1. Ajit Singh Bagha. Banur had orders.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh: A Short History of the Sikhs, p, 49.

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jealousy and made up his mind to violently contest the office. He attached a few Masands to his cause, and called himself Guru. His Masands went in all directions to announce his accession but the Sikhs who knew of the late Guru's decision refused to accept him.[1] Then Ram Rai decided to place his case before the Mughal Emperor who was kindly disposed towards him.

Dr. I.B. Bannerjee feels that since at the time of Guru Har Rai's death 'Ram Rai was a mere boy in his early times, it is difficult to beleive that he had done anything in his own initiative.' Moreover he was a hostage whom the Emperor kept as a security for the continued good conduct of Guru Har Rai. Furthermore to the learned Bannerjee the Sikh records provide more or less clear hints as to the truth of the matter that a certain Masand, Gurdas was the prime mover in Ram Rai's attempt to seize apostleship.

On careful scrutiny of the recorded events, the presumptions on which Dr. Bannerjee seems to have based his conclusion do not stand the test of argument. Ram Rai was, at that time, in 1664, eighteen years and records corroborate that he was shrewd, quickwitted and well-versed in Sikh scriptures and theology and it was because of these qualities that he was sent by Guru Har Rai to Aurangzeb to satisfy him. It is accepted on all hands that he achieved a remarkable success in the Moghul court. In the presence of all this, it is difficult to share the view of I.B. Bannerjee that Ram Rai did not do anything on his own account, although it seems to be true that his anger was stepped up by Masands who wished Ram Rai to play a tool in their hands.

Secondly the assertion that Ram Rai was a hostage in the Moghul court and as such could not be blamed for any act, also flounders on the rock of clearcut evidence. We have carefully studied the text of the inscription on the *deorah* (epitaph) of Ram Rai which clearly indicates that he could freely move to and from Delhi and also among the Sikhs at that place. It also appears that Ram Rai could visit Kiratpur whenever he wished. At Guru Har Krishan's passing away at Delhi, Ram Rai, himself took the urn containing the ashes of the former's body for submergence in the Ganges at Hardwar. Hence in view of these evidences, it is difficult to understand how Ram Rai was a hostage.

The Emperor, however, saw in this a very good opportunity for realising his religious mission. If he could get Ram Rai the apostleship, the latter would be a mere tool in his hands

1. Duncan Greenless : The Gospel of Guru Granth, P xci.

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and through him he would perhaps be able to spread Islamic faith in the Punjab, or even if he was able to set both brothers at variance,[1] and they shall die by mutual slaughter, his purpose would be served. According to Khushwant Singh, the Emperor wanted to play a decisive role in the affairs of the Sikhs.[2]

Accordingly, the Emperor issued orders to the Guru to repair to Delhi. The task of executing the order was assigned to Raja Jai Singh who sent his emissary to Kiratpur to prevail upon the Guru to come to Delhi. The Guru refused to oblige him, for he had been enjoined by his father not to see the Emperor. Ultimately the difficulty was removed by Raja Jai Singh who invited the Guru to his own Bangalow at Raisina instead of residing in some Moghul palace or Harem. According to Dr. Chhabra it was also made clear to the Guru that at Delhi, he would not be compelled to go to the presence of the Emperor.

In A.D. 1664 the young Guru left for Delhi. Thousands of Sikhs who thought that the Guru was sent for by his Majesty to mete out the same sort of treatment as the Emperor was, at that time, dealing to Hindu faqirs with a view to coerce them to embrace Islam, started with the Guru to perish in case any ill happened to him. The Guru, however, forbade them to proceed with him; and when they persisted, he, on arrival at Panjokhra in the Ambala District, drew a line on the ground with order that anyone who crossed it to Delhi side against his wishes was to be held an outcaste. His mother and about 20 Sikhs were permitted to cross, and they formed his retinue.

On reaching Delhi, the Guru put up with Raja Jai Singh in his palace. According to Khazan Singh, "the Guru was treated with respect and prince Muazzam paid him a visit as a mark of distinction. The Prince was highly pleased with what he saw of the Guru and praised him a good deal before his Majesty".[3]

The Emperor wanted to test the Guru's intelligence, of which everybody spoke very highly. The boy-Guru was surrounded by the women of Jai Singh's house, including maid-servants who were equally well-dressed, and was asked to identify the Rani. Guru Har Krishan looked at their faces and had no difficulty in recognising her. Many other stories showing Guru's sagacity are available in Sikh accounts. The Guru at

1. Macauliffe : The Sikh religion IV, page 318.
2. Khushwant Singh : A History of the Sikhs, p. 70.
3. Khazan Singh : History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion, page 144.

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Delhi would move among the poor and the destitute. Cholera and smallpox were raging fiercely in the city.[1] The Guru went everyday with food, medicine and clothes. Dargha Mal, Lakhi Mal and Gurbaksh Mal were asked to spare all the offerings to allay the physical as well as mental sufferings of the poor. The young Guru through his fraternization with the troubled persons won many adherents.

According to the Sikh chronicles the Emperor was convinced that the choice of Guru Har Krishan was not wrong and dismissed the claim of Ram Rai[2]; but Aurangzeb did not announce his arbitration and in fact, he was content to have both the claimants under his thumb[3]. Shortly after, the Guru was seized with high fever which was followed by small pox which he breathed his last on March 30, 1664, and his body was cremated on the banks of Jamna, where now stands the Gurdawara Bala Sahib.

While still on his death-bed, the Sikhs asked him who should be their spiritual leader; for Ram Rai was plotting at the Moghul court, and Dhir Mal and other Sodhis were waiting for his death to put forward their claims. The Guru sent for five paisa and a coconut (customary presents for the succeeding Guru) and placing them on the ground bowed his head before them with the remark "Baba Bakala", meaning thereby that his successor was Guru Tegh Bahadur.

ESTIMATE

The onward march of consolidation and progress which had been the chief characteristic of Sikhism under the successors of Guru Nanak received a setback during the apostleship of Guru Har Rai and his son Guru Har Krishan although Guru Har Rai through his tremendous efforts to spread Sikh faith in Doaba and Malwa as also to evolve alternative organisation known as *Bakhshish* for the proselytising work in different parts of the country and abroad tried to sustain the speed of the progress. But the deterioration of Masand system could not be arrested nor a clear-cut social apparatus fashioned out to bear the Sikh ideology in its totality. Even then, in Guru Har Rai's time, everything was under control. But during Har Krishan's ministry because of his early age, things began to

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1. The important sikhs who accompanied the Guru were : Bhai Darga Mal the Diwan, Bhai Mati Das, and Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Jetha, Bhai Dayala, Bhai Mani Ram, Bhai Gurditta, the high priest, Masand Gurbaksh Mal.
2. Forster Travels I, Page 222.
3. Ram Rai was given seven villages : Khurvadi, Dhamaval, Chamasari, Dhartanali, Panditwati, Hianwal, Rajpura. Here Ram Rai later built a religious centre of his own called Ram Rai's Dehra.

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drift. The office of Masand, once famous for its integrity, fell into unworthy hands that became an instrument of jobbery and corruption. The death of Guru Har Rai at the early age of thirty leaving behind two minor sons and nominating the younger of them to the succession, opened to these men the desired opportunities and some of them took up the cause of Ram Rai with a view to bringing about a situation in which the dispute about the succession and the subsequent weakening of the Guru's position would open to them an unrestrained field for malversation of the offerings. Moreover, Ram Rai's obstinacy to gain the apostalic seat by hook or by crook not only allowed himself to become as the tool in the hands of Masands but also provided an opportunity to Aurangzeb to intervene in Sikh affairs which by all means should have been the exclusive concern of the Sikhs.

Thus, the degeneration of the Masand system, the dissentient sects, the rival claimants for Guru Gaddi, the Emperor's subtle move to encourage scheism among the Sikhs. The absence of the social strategy to allow the Sikh ideology in all its aspects to express itself unleashed forces of progressive disintegration of the Sikh faith.

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Chapter 12

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

(b. 1621; d. 1675)

Childhood

Fifth and the youngest son of the sixth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur was born at Amritsar on April 1, 1621 A.D. On the auspicious occasion of Tegh Bahadur's birth, Guru Hargobind invoked Akal Purkh (Timeless Master) to bestow on the new child unflinching courage to fight forces of evil and to work for the establishment of Truth and Dharma to the last breath of life. As we shall see later, the father's aspirations and expectations of his little son were subsequently realized in full measure. Guru Hargobind named him as Tyag Mal.

As a child, Tegh Bahadur was brought up with utmost care and attention. He lived and grew in the atmosphere of religious discipline. During childhood 'Tegh Bahadur was aloof but always active. He was silent and meditative but very energetic and quick to learn everything, his teachers taught him'.[1]

Education

At the age of four and a half, Baba Tegh Bahadur was entrusted to Bhai Budha and Bhai Gurdas for his education who, apart from imparting education themselves, arranged other teachers also to impart knowledge in different subjects. 'The Guru studied languages, History, Arithmetic, Metaphysics, Logic, Theology, Six systems and classics like the Bhagvata Gita, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Elementary Islamic Philoshphy, Koranic Lore, Sufi Texts were also taught[2]. Guru Tegh Bahadur also learnt military tactics and made himself adept in horse-manship, swordsmanship and the science of looking after the horses. He also became well-versed in music in which his interest was deep—the fact which is amply proved by his poetic compositions set to different music measures.

Owes a lot to General Environment

Guru Tegh Bahadur owed not a little to the general environment and to his parents and teachers. From his mother Nanaki, he imbibed tenderness of his heart, love of solitude and charitableness. From his warrior father, he learnt the noble qualities of fearlessness and courageous will to fight tyranny, love of travels, skill in the use of arms and above all the urge

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1. Trilochan Singh Dr., *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, page 7.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

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to uphold dharma. Baba Budha so affected his sensitive mind that there grew proclivities of mysticism which he himself had imbibed from Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion. Under the influence of Bhai Gurdas, Tegh Bahadur developed philosophic and poetic bent of mind. The general atmosphere also contributed a lot towards the growth of the psyche of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Amritsar, the place of Guru Tegh Bahadur's birth, had already assumed the role of the capital town of Sikhism. The holy tank, the revered Hari Mandir rising in its pristine beauty in its midst, the Akal Takhat, recently constructed to serve as the Supreme temporal authority of the Sikhs, and above all the charismatic presence of Guru Hargobind had lent a rare grace and charm to the place. Devotees from far and near, sometime in groups and sometime severally, rallied to this Mecca of theirs from all sides "Everyday, both morn and eve, assemblies were held where prayers were offered, hymns were sung often to martial tunes and talks given on Sikh tenets. From the rise of the day, the Guru was busy receiving gifts of weapons, horses etc., from his faithful visitors, underscoring the virtues of martial valour and heroism, watching feats of physical strength, such as wrestling bouts, gatka play and supervising leasons in horsemanship and swordsmanship. In between, he would find time occasionally, to organise hunting excursions, then considered the best mode of imparting training in war maneouvers."[1] All this left a deep imprint on the impressionable mind of young Tegh Bahadur. No wonder, he showed keen interest in learning the military arts and developed fondness for hunting and preaching.

During these early years of his life, Tegh Bahadur did not always stay at Amritsar. He did a lot of travelling in company with his father and other members of the family. In course of these travels, he paid visits to Tarn Taran, Khadur Sahib, Goindwal and Kartarpur. At Goindwal and Kartarpur, his stay was for pretty long period. However his studies suffered no interruption because his teachers Bhai Budha, Bhai Gurdas and others were mostly staying with him.[2]

Tegh Bahadur was married to Gujri, the daughter of Lal Chand, a Subhikhi Khatri of Lakhnaur near Ambala who had migrated and settled at Kartarpur. His brother-in-law, Kirpal Chand who rose to prominence under Guru Gobind Singh also migrated with his father while his elder brother-in-law Mehar Chand continued living at his ancestral place. Family links were thus maintained with Lakhnaur.

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1. Dr. Fauja Singh: Guru Tegh Bahadur—Martyr and Teacher, p. 12.
2. Dr. Fauja Singh: Guru Tegh Bahadur—Martyr and Teacher, pp. 13-4.

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Sahibzada Tegh Bahadur was an eye-wintess to the battles, if not all of them, which his father had to fight against the Mughals, his physical presence at Amritsar, Kartarpur and Phagwara at the time of fighting is undoubted, though about the battle of Lehira, it is not possible to say anything definitely. This shows that Tegh Bahadur along with other members of his family had to pass through arduous times.

In the battle of Kartarpur (26th April, 1635) when the Mughal forces under the overall command of Kale Khan and Painda Khan attacked Guru Hargobind. Tegh Bahadur fought valiantly in the rearguard of the Guru's army. Fearlessly he rode into the thick of the battle and using lance and sword worked havoc in the enemy rank. The father, Guru Hargobind was so much pleased with his heroic performance that according to a popular Sikh tradition, in a thrill of exuberance of joy, he changed his name from Tyag Mal to Tegh Bahadur meaning 'Hero of the sword'.

Ever since the battle of Kartarpur, Guru Hargobind had lived at Kiratpur. He, during all these years, continued his programme of training his people in military skills by means of weapon training, horsemanship and hunting excursions. Occasionally he would go out in the hills as well as in the plains on missionary tours. Sahibzada Tegh Bahadur took deep interest in all this and would often accompany his father in his hunting expeditions and missionary tours. According to Dr. Fauja Singh "in 1638, the death of Baba Gurditta, left a deep impress on the mind of young Tegh Bahadur. It was for the second time that a son of the sixth Guru had earned his displeasure by indulgence in occult powers." Atal Rai had done it many years earlier at Amritsar and had been severally reprimanded for this act of indiscretion. He took his father's displeasure to heart and met early and premature end. Baba Gurditta now committed a similar indiscretion for which he got an equally severe reprobation from his father. His end, too, was similar to that of his younger brother Atal Rai. The lesson of these two incidents was too strong for Tegh Bahadur to forget. That he could never be unmindful of this fact is amply evidenced by the resoluteness with which during his incarceration at Delhi he resisted the insistant demand of the authorities for the display of a miracle.

Pontificate given to Har Rai

In the last week of February, 1644, Guru Hargobind invested Har Rai with Guruship and asked his sons to show reverence due to the pontificate. Guru Tegh Bahadur was the first to bow to Guru Har Rai. Sikh records state that 'a change occurred in Guru Tegh Bahadur's disposition even during the life of Guru Hargobind and he grew indifferent to the world and its matters. Taking into consideration these tendencies of

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his, Guru Hargobind considered him unfit for the Guruship and bestowed it on Har Rai'.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was not given Guruship because the people mistook him

The aforesaid circumstances leading to the non-bestowal of the pontificate on Tegh Bahadur are not convincing, firstly because Guru Tegh Bahadur never turned recluse, hesitant of doing work or taking interest in the affairs around him; his was only contemplative silence and secondly if Tegh Bahadur had really turned a recluse, Guru Hargobind had not told his wife, Nanaki on her anxiety to know as to why his noble son had been by-passed. 'He will live long enough to shoulder his responsibility and do great deeds'. It appears that Guru Hargobind had to ignore the claim of Guru Tegh Bahadur not because he was renouncer of the world; but because the people in general mistook his contemplative silence. Immediately after the passing of the Sikh Guru, Tegh Bahadur alongwith his wife and mother Nanaki went to Bakala, an historic village in Amritsar district about two miles and a half north of the Beas Railway station and which was a flourishing business centre in the seventeenth century. The possible reason for retiring to Bakala was that his stay at Kiratpur might not create an in-group of his followers.

At Bakala

A misconception

For nearly twenty years (1644-64) the Guru lived at Bakala in the house built by Bhai Mehra[1] specially for the Guru. He was amply provided by income from Hargobindpur[2] and the whole of Amritsar district which was considered as his diocese. It is wrong to presume that the Guru confined himself in the underground cell of his residence and had got no social intercourse with the world. The Guru did meditate but to conquer the senses in the clear sight of the insight; but at the same time he did maintain contacts with the world outside. 'He was deeply concerned with keen interest social and political changes that were taking place, as an artist watches a drama in which he is to play a hero's part. His brother-in-law, Kirpal Chand who was a soldier in Guru Har Rai's army came twice a year and informed him of all the small and great things that were happening at Kiratpur. Baba Dwarka Das, the descendant of Guru Amar Das and the eminent Sikh of Amritsar district, like Bhai Gurhia, and Baba Gurditta came to pay him homage and brought with them the news of Lahore.[3] Now and then he even went out for hunting. He did not practise any self-mortification; nor did he undergo any monastic penance of an ascetic.[4] He attended to household affairs as other people did.

The Guru was deeply concerned with worldly affairs

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1. Bhai Mehra was a devout Sikh of Guru Hargobind.
2. Gyan Singh : *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* p. 264.
3. Trilochan Singh : *Guru Tegh Bahadur* pp. 94-5.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 93

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Pays vists to principal holy shrines

After staying at Bakala for about twelve long years, Tegh Bahadur along with his family decided to visit some of the principal holy shrines of the country. With that end in view, he proceeded to Kiratpur[1] wherefrom he vended his way through Ropar and Banur and reached the first big sacred centre, Karukshetra around the middle of A.D. 1656 (1713 B.K.). From here he set out for Hardwar where he reached on 29 March A.D. 1657.[2] Having stayed here for three months the party left for Prayag via Garh Mukteshwar, Mathura and Agra. The Guru along with his party reached Prayag[3] in the beginning of A.D. 1661. After a month's stay there, the onward journey was resumed. The party reached Kashi (Benares) on 21st June, A.D. 1661.[4] From Benares the Guru reached Sasaram and then Gaya where he met Bhai Jetha Seth a devoted Sikh of Guru Hargobind who took him to Patna. It was here that the news of the passing away of Guru Har Rai (Katik Vadi 9, 1718 BK.—6th October, A.D. 1661) reached him and he decided to return to Kiratpur to mourn the death of the seventh Guru. On the way back he along with his party, arrived at Prayag[5] on 5 Magh 1719 BK (3 January, A.D. 1663). When he was approaching Delhi, he learnt that the late Guru Har Rai's son and successor Guru Har Krishan Dev had arrived in Delhi accompanied by his mother, Mata Sulakhni. Thereupon, he changed his programme and resolved to break his journey at Delhi. The actual date of his arrival at Delhi was 21 March, 1664.[6] The Guru stayed at Dharamsala Bhai Kalayan for some time where a large number of devout Sikhs paid their respects to him. Baba Ram Rai also called upon him at this place and informed him in detail about the visit of Guru Har Krishan Dev to Delhi. Shortly after, Tegh Bahadur accompanied by his mother and other people waited upon Guru Har Krishan Dev and his mother Sulakhni at the residence of Mirza Raja Jai Singh and expressed profound sense of sorrow and sympathy in their bereavement. Immediately after this, Tegh Bahadur left for Bakala.

Nominated as Guru by Guru Har Krishan

On March 30 1664, Guru Har Krishan on the verge of his passing away declared that his successor would be Baba Bakala meaning thereby that his successor would be his 'Baba' living

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1. Sarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian* A.D. 1790. Sakhi 13. Reference taken from Dr. Fauja Singh's Book *Guru Tegh Bahadur—Martyr and Teacher*, p. 22.
2. *Bhat Vahi Talauda.*
3. According to *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, Tegh Bahadur and his family were present at Prayag on the full moon of day of Baisakhi, 1719 BK. (19 April, 1661).
4. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni.*
5. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, Khata Barhtion ka.
6. *Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni*, and *Guru Kian Sakhian.*

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at Bakala and in token thereof he entrusted the spiritual regalia (five pice and a piece of Naryal) to Diwan Durgah Mal. According to Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind and Guru Kian Sakhian by Sarup Singh Kaushish the Guru did not leave any vagueness[1] in his statement and actually mentioned the name of Tegh Bahadur to be the Guru, and Diwan Durgah Mal to take the articles of spiritual regalia to Bakala and personally offer it to the new Guru. The news of the passing away of Guru Har Krishan Dev spread far and wide but somehow the information that reached Bakala and the country around regarding the nomination of the successor was incomplete and vague with the result that many false pretenders had become self-appointed successors of Guru Har Krishan and the problem of finding the true Baba which at first seemed simple and logically conclusive had now become complicated. There were twenty two[2] pretenders who set themselves up as successors to Guru Har Krishan at Bakala.[3] The Sodhis of Lahore, the Mina Sodhis of Amritsar, the descendants of Suraj Mal and many impostor-Sodhis who acquired certificates from Pandas to declare that they were Sodhi Babas, set up tents, and employed agents to do propaganda for them, and win supporters even on payment. All material means of inducement including bribery and enticement were used by the paid advocates and propagandists of each impostor Guru.[4] The most vociferous and conspicuous claimant, however, was Dhir Mal, who was the first to pitch his camp at Bakala. There were two attractive features of his claim to Guruship: One was that he was the only direct descendant of the eldest son (crown-prince) Baba Gurditta whose son and grandson had so far reigned as the seventh and eighth Guru, and secondly he possessed the first compiled copy of *Adi Granth* prepared by Guru Arjan Dev.

No vagueness in statement

Impostors set themselves up as successors to Guru Har Krishan

Dhir Mal's Claim

A few months were passed in this state of confusion and then in the month of August 11, 1664, a Sikh Sangant from Delhi arrived at Bakala in obedience to the late Guru's command for the installation ceremony of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The Sangat was led by Diwan Durgha Mal, the son of Dawarka Dass Chhibbar,[5] a prominent devotee of Guru Har Krishan Dev. The Sangat included several other prominent Sikhs[5] such as

Sikh Sangat led by Diwan Durgah Mal comes to Bakala in

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1. Till the discovery of Bhatvahis it was generally thought that Guru Har Krishan made only a vague hint regarding the succession of Guru Tegh Bahadur.
2. Koer Singh, *Gur Bilas Padshahi* 10, p. 22. According to the author many Guruships were set up.
3. Kesar Singh Chhiber : *Bansavalinama.*
   Agon sunia bai manjian; Guru Ban bai the han Bahutere.
   Saras Guru nij ka kehvai; bai bai the manjian lai
   Sikh Sakha je kol avai; Bai thavan su bhet chadhavai.
4. Trilochan Singh : *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 121.
5. *Bhat Vahi Talauda*, Pargana Jind.

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obedience to the order of the late Guru Har Krishan

Chaupat Rai, son of Pera and grandson of Ballu and great grandson of Mulu; Mani Ram son of Mai Dass and grandson of Ballu; Jammu, son of Padma and grandson of Kaula, Gurbaksh son of Baba; Nanu son of Baba and grandson of Unaida and Mata Sulakhni, mother of Guru Har Krishan Dev. Baba Gurditta son of Bhai Budha and Dwarka Dass[1] son of Arjani Sahib and grandson of Baba Mohri Bhalla were also there at the installation ceremony. It appears that they were specially invited to the occasion. The installation ceremony was held in open Diwan. The Tikka cermony (affixing of Safron mark on the forehead) was performed by Baba Gurditta. Diwan Durgah Mal informed the assemblage about the late Guru's decision of appointing Tegh Bahadur as his successor.

Installation ceremony

Visits Kirtpur to condole with Bibi Roop Kaur

Even then a few months passed in confusion. During this period, unworried by what Dhir Mal and other impostors were doing and confident that truth would ultimately prevail, Guru Tegh Bahadur went about his work in the normal way. Ten days later his succession (August 21, 1664), he[2] accompanied by Dwarka Das, Diwan Durgah Mal & Jaggan went to Kiratpur to condole with Bibi Roop Kaur over the deaths of her father Guru Har Rai and her brother Guru Har Krishan Dev. The visit synchronised with the holy ceremony of the immersion of the late Guru's ashes in the waters of the Sutlej on 22nd August. On Diwali Day[3] (9th Oct. 1664) Makhan Shah[4], a Labana trader, came to Bakala from Tanda, a village in Srinagar Territory. According to Sikh tradition he had come to offer 101 Gold Muhars, which he had promised when his ship, laden with merchandise, had been saved from sinking by a prayer to the Guru. But, on reaching Bakala, he was taken aback to find many of the Sodhi pretenders setting

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1. *Guru Kian Sakhian* by Sarup Singh Kaushish.
2. Bhat Vahi Multani Sindi. Also refer to Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind.
3. According to 'Guru Kian Sakhian' by Sarup Das, Makhan Shah along with his son Lal Das and his wife visited Bakala in 1721 B K. on the Diwali Day (*Bhat Vahian*).
4. Karam Singh historian says that Labanas or Van were never traders on vanjaras. From the negative argument that Makhan shah was not a trader, Karam Singh draws another conclusion that Makhan Shah must have been a masand who had brought the money of his diocese on the Baisakhi day as it was the custom then obtaining among the masands to do so on the Baisakhi day or Diwali Day. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh 'Had Makhan Shah been a masand of Gujrat, he would have certainly waited till the dispute was settled. Sewa Das in his parchian calls him both a labana trader and masand. Garja Singh in Shahid Bilas by Sewa Singh calls him 'a trader' having deep faith in Sikhism

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Makhan Shah's visit to Bakala & his plan to identify the real Guru.

themselves up as Gurus. According to Sikh tradition, Makhan Shah hit upon a plan for detecting the Guru. He started offering two Muhars to each instead of 101 Muhars. He thought that the real Guru would himself ask for the remaining 99 Muhars. When he was convinced of the falsity of the pretenders, he enquired if there was any other Sodhi. Some one informed him of Tegh Bahadur who was living in solitude and had no truck with the people outside.

Makhan Shah went to Guru Tegh Bahadur. He made obeisance before him by placing two Muhars. Guru Tegh Bahadur said, "O Sikh ! you promised an offering of 101 Muhars[1] when the ship was on the point of sinking, why do then, hesitate to pay the remaining 99 Muhars ?" Thereupon Makhan Shah ascended a house-top and waving his flag, proclaimed from there 'I have found the Guru; I have found the Guru'. On hearing this, the Sikhs assembled from every quarter and paid their homage to the Guru.

The story has many snags

From this tradition, it appears that Makhan Shah did not know Guru Tegh Bahadur. It does not sound correct. Makhan Shah had been the follower of Sikhism since long.[2] When Guru Hargobind visited Kashmir he waited upon him and at his request, the Guru visited Tanda, a village founded and developed by Makhan Shah himself on the bank of the river Jhelum. Guru Har Rai too was accorded hearty devotion on his part. He also paid visits to the eighth Guru at Delhi. He was a well-known Sikh and had acquaintances with almost all the important Sikhs of Kashmir or those who were permanently attached to the Guru's household. In the face of all this, it is rather unjust to assume that Makhan Shah did not know Guru Tegh Bahadur or what Guru Har Krishan meant by 'Baba Bakala'.

Our view

This being so, he ought not to have offered two mohars to each Guru as a strategy to find out the real Guru. The truth seems to be that he visited Bakala to lay down his offering of 101 gold Muhars with his men; but on finding that the impostors were creating confusion, he and his men took up the cause of the Guru so vigorously that the impostors

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1. Makhan Shah vowed to donate 500 dinars. Guru Kian Sakhian mentions only 101 gold muhars. Bhat Vahi Bijlauton ki gives the same figure. We however attach more weight to the evidence of Bhatvahis because firstly these are the earliest available record and secondly the Bhatts were the persons who had the intimate knowledge of the Sikhs and their history.

2. *Bhat Vahis.*

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were completely exposed. When Makhan Shah visited the Guru, his two sons, Lal Chand and Chandu Lal and his wife Solji were with him.[1]

In this way, the Guru could assume the undisputed charge of the Sikhs only after nearly six months and a half. The Guru appointed Mati Das and Sati Das[2] as Dewan and minister and Bhai Dayal as the household minister.

Dhir Mal's nefarious attempts to snatch Guruship forcibly

The discovery of the genuine Guru put an end to the pretensions of the false Gurus. But Dhir Mal did not reconcile with the turn of tide; on the other hand, he was determined to snatch the guruship by force. He felt that peace-loving pacificism of Guru Tegh Bahadur was no match for his armed might and money-power He schemed to kill the Guru and for this purpose, he hatched a conspiracy with the help of his masand, Shihan. Shihan, with about a hundred armed ruffians attacked the house of the Guru. Shihan aimed a bullet at Guru Tegh Bahadur and fired point blank. The bullet scratched the surface of his shoulder without causing any serious wound. Guru Tegh Bahadur stood calm and composed as if nothing had happened. Diwan Durgah Mal, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Dayal Das and Kirpal Chand gave physical covering to the Guru, hitting anyone that came near them. Before Shihan, could load another bullet; Kirpal attacked him and wrenched the matchlock from Shiahn's hand. At this, the raiders ran back, carrying with them all that they could get hold of. The whole operation was conducted under the very eye of the wicked Dhir Mal.

Attack on the Guru by Shihan and his gang

The Sikhs attacked Dhir Mal's house

When the Sikhs learnt all this, they attacked the house of Dhir Mal[3] under the leadership of Makhan Shah and Kirpal. They not only recovered the things plundered from the Guru's house but also carried away some of Dhir Mal's belongings.

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1. *Bhat Vahi Khata Bijlauton ka.* Makhan Shah beta Dase ka pota Arthe ka ..... Lal Chand Makhan ka Chandu Lal Makhan Shah ka Solji istri Makhan Shah ki ..... Salsat Rai Sai Ikis ki Diwali Shanivar ke din Bakala gaon may aya. Guru Tegh Bahadur ji mehal Name ke Darbar Ikotar Sau Mohar Bheta ki. Seth Dhuma Nai aaya beta Kahne bijlaut ka,
2. Macauliffe Sikh Religion vol (iv) p. 334. Dewan Durgah Mal requested the Guru that he being too old to carry the heavy responsibilities of the past, be relieved and in his place, his nephews Mati Das and Sati Das be appointed as Diwan and minister of Darbar. He further recommended the appointment of Dayal Das, the son of Bhai Bulla, Rai who fell martyr in Guru Hargobind's battle of Amritsar as the household minister. Kesar Singh *Bansavali nama.*
3. According to Suraj Parkash, Dhir Mal was attacked before he left for Kiratpur. According to Gyan Singh he had already left for Kartarpur and was overtaken by a hot chase.

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Guru forgave Shihan & Dhir Mal

Besides this, they took possession of the copy of the **Adi-Granth** lying with Dhir Mal. Dhir Mal and Shihan were handcuffed. The Guru forgave them considering forgiveness to be the greatest virtue and ordered the Sikhs to return the articles looted from Dhir Mal's house. The Sikhs returned everything but the copy of 'Adi-Granth', which they considered to be the property of the Sikhs and not a private belonging of Dhir Mal. Later on, when Guru Tegh Bahadur came to know of it, he persuaded the Sikhs to return it. Accordingly, the copy was placed near the bank of the Beas and Dhir Mal was informed of its location so that he might get hold of it. Thus copy came in possession of Dhir Mal, whose descendants still possess it.

The Guru pays visit to Amritsar

On November 22, 1664, Guru Tegh Bahadur left for his birth palce, Amritsar to pay homage to the sacred place. He bathed in the sacred tank but the ministers of Hari Mandir shut its doors against him, and he was not allowed to enter the holy precincts.[1] According to Trilochan Singh[2], the whole of Amritsar was under the control of Harji Mina and the pirests of Hari Mandir also belonged to the Minas. This being so, the Minas feared that once Guru Tegh Bahadur and his adherents entered Hari Mandir, they would never leave it and drive the masands of the Mina Guru out of it. Dr. Ganda Singh, however, says that the doors of the Golden Temple were slammed fearing that they would have to submit to a central control. In our opinion the view expressed by Trilochan Singh seems to be correct, firstly because the necessary evidence is available and secondly because it looks more probable.

Doors of Hari Mandir were slammed

Whatever the merit of the story, it is evident that the organisational cohesion which had been the glory of Sikhism was becoming a thing of the past and the movement was losing the strength that Guru's undisputed leadership had given to it.

Walla

Under the circumstances, the Guru thought it advisable to return to Kiratpur. On way back in view of the sincere devotion of Mata Hariyan, he stayed at village Walla near Amritsar.

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1. Trilochan Singh : *Guru Tegh Bahadur* p. 168. Prithi Chand Guru Vansavli and the writings of Harji Mina and Meharban clearly indicate that they had a complete control over the Hari Mandir and the people of Amritsar. Even the author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib first came into contact with Meharban before he met Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai.

2. Opposition to the Guru was organised which clearly indicates that it was the work of some rival sect.

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Khadur, Goindwal, Tarn Taran, Khem Karan

Leaving Amritsar the Guru decided to spend some time touring the Majha and Malwa regions of the Punjab before proceeding to Kiratpur. The Guru, with all his entourage, wended his way through the heartland of Majha and on the way probably made brief visits to Khadur Sahib, Goindwal and Tarn Tarn. Last of all, he reached Khem Karan a town now in the extreme west of Amritsar district. At this place, one Kambhoj Chaudhary Raghupat Rai, out of devotion, presented a mare to the Guru. During his sojourns at different places, large numbers of country people rallied to him to benefit from his teachings. After travelling across the Majha, Guru Tegh Bahadur crossed the river Sutlej and entered the Malwa region from the side of Ferozepur. He was soon in the midst of Lakhi jungle — the name by which the entire sparsely populated tract of land now covering roughly the district of Bhatinda and Faridkot was called. There in this area a large number of villages had the honour of Guru's holy visit. Talwandi Saboke (Damdama Sahib), Maur and Maisarkhan are but a few of the many such places which were sanctified by the Guru's presence, but for want of evidence it is difficult for us to ascertain which place was visited at this time and which on subsequent occasions.

Enters the Malwa region

Bangar

Next to the Malwa, Bangar area (which is, in fact, extension of Malwa) was hallowed by the Guru reached Dhamdhan on the occasion of Baisakhi (1675). Guru Tegh Bahadur liked the place and thought of developing it into a centre of Sikhism. With this view, the Guru gave some money to Bhai Daggo the devoted masand of this place and gave instructions to him to raise a building with a well for water supply and to desilt the tank nearly to be named by him 'Gurusar'. Having spent a few days here, the Guru reached Kiratpur in May 1665 (around 9 Jeth, 1722 B.K). On May 13, 1665, the Guru attended the Satarvin (a ceremony performed on the 17th day from death) of Raja Dip Singh of Bilaspur. Mata Nanaki, Mata Hari (Baba Suraj Mal's wife), Dip Chand and Nand Chand (sons of Baba Suraj Mal), Diwan Durga Mal, Jetha, Dayal Das, Durga Dass (son of Padma Rai Hajabat), and Dariya Khan (son of Mula Jalhan)[1] were with the Guru.

Dhamdhan

Reached Kiratpur and attended the Satarvin of Raja Dip Singh

The Guru was received with utmost respect by Rani Champa and did all she could to make the Guru's three days stay as comfortable as possible. During his stay, the Guru expressed that he would like to build a new settlement somewhere near Kiratpur and offered to buy a suitable piece of land for the purpose. The Rani consulted her ministers and

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1. *BhaVahi Purbi Dakhni.*

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offered that to donate the site of Makhowal[1]. The Guru highly appreciated the spirit of devotion in which the offer was made but he preferred to buy it. The Rani was not willing to receive anything, but ultimately the Guru succeeded in prevailing upon her to accept a token amount of Rs 500.00.[2] On returning to Kiratpur, the Guru instructed Diwan Darga Mal to make a careful survey of the land. This done, the foundation stone of the new Basti was laid by Baba Gurditta, the son of Baba Budha on June 19, 1665 (Har 21, 1722 B.K.). This new Basti was named Chak Nanaki, after the revered name of the Guru's mother. In course of time, a beautiful town of Anandpur grew up around it.

Foundation of Chak Nanaki

EASTERN TOURS

Factors

The Guru did not have a prolonged stay at Chak Nanaki. He appointed his trustworthy followers to supervise the construction work at that place and himself left for travels (August 1665). What were the factors which prompted him to go on tours hurriedly while it was expected that Guru would stay at Chak Nanaki for sometime to watch the growth of the new settlement. Various explanations have been put forward in this connection. One explanation is that the Guru did so with a view to getting away from the scene of the Sodhis, rivalries and machinations. But this explanation is inadequate because except Dhir Mal of Kartarpur and Harji of Amritsar, there was none actively hostile to him, rather the sons of Suraj Mal (Dip Chand and Nand Chand) were favourably inclined towards him and they had attended installation ceremony at Bakala and later in May 1665 had accompanied him to Bilaspur to attend the *starvin* function of the late Raja Dip Chand of that state.

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1. According to Kesar Singh Chhiber and a few other records, Guru Tegh Bahadur bought three villages : Makhowal, Mathur and Lodhipur, originally founded by two Pathan brothers Makhe Khan and Kate Khan, in local tradition as rital. The Guru selected Makhowal village for temple, and his residence. It was named Nanak Chak– the name which has come down in revenue records as 'Nanaki Chak'. The habitation of the city which was extended towards the south east was named Anandpur either by Guru Tegh Bahadur or by Guru Gobind Singh. According to Guru ki Sakhian By Sarup Das, he founded the Chak Nanaki on Har 21, 1722 BK.

2. The statement of Bhat Vahi is not clear regarding this point It may even mean free gift. The general view, however, is that this land was purchased from the Raja of Bilaspur (Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer Bhai Santokh Singh, Bhai Sukha Singh, Bhai Gian Singh), Teja Singh and Ganda Singh in their 'A Short History of the Sikhs, page 52, say that Guru Tegh Bahadur paid Rs. 500 for it. But they have not given their source of information. Hence we may conclude that some payment was made though we cannot say what exactly it was.

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According to another explanation the Guru went to Dhamdhan (Bangar) to fetch some of his luggage he had left there during his earlier visit to the place. There he was arrested by the Mughals and taken to Delhi and produced before the Emperor Aurangzeb. Then, through the intercession of Raja Ram Singh of Amber with the Emperor, he was released after which he proceeded towards the east on the advice of Raja Ram Singh. This explanation too appears inadequate because firstly it implies that Punjab was not a safe place for the Guru to stay in and secondly it meant that the Guru had no set programme of his own and travelled as demanded by the circumstances.

The plausible view seems to be that the Guru undertook tours to further strengthen the links with the sangats functioning in the eastern regions of the country whom he had personally observed during his earlier tour in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as also to remove their general grouse that much attention was not paid to them. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh, the Guru undertook tours in response to the invitation of some Sikhs from the east, namely Bhai Bulaki Das and Bhai Hulas Chand from Dacca and Bhai Darbara and Bhai Chain Sukh from Patna, who met the Guru at Kiratpur and begged him to come with his family and major portion of the Darbar.[1]

Saifabad

The date when the Guru left Anandpur for undertaking tour of the east was about August A.D. 1665. From Anandpur, the first important halt was at Saifabad. The Guru had many of staunch devotees accompanying him, such as Sati Das, Mati Das, Gawal Das, Gurdas, Sangata, Jetha and Dayal Das. The Nawab Saif Khan[2] accorded hearty welcome to the Guru and served him with devotion.

Dhamdhan

From this, the Guru proceeded to Dhamdhan in the Bangar Area. This was the second visit of the Guru to this place. The purpose of the Guru seems to be to see for himself the progress of his projects at the place whose care he had assigned to the local Masand, Bhai Daggo when he visited this place for the first time. Besides this, the Guru wanted to reinstruct the Masand to follow the Guru's teachings with sincerity and devotion. In fact, the Guru was interested in developing it into a major centre of Sikh faith.

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1. Trilochan Singh; *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 178.
2. The place is about half a mile from Punjabi University, Patiala. The place was named so after the name of its founder Saif Khan. The place is now called Bahadur Garh after the name of the fort which was named after Guru Tegh Bahadur.

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Guru Tegh Bahadur's arrival at Dhamdhan must be sometime prior to Diwali because the day was celebrated by organising a fair which was attended by large crowds of people. The Guru prolonged his stay here to celebrate Guru Nanak's Birth Anniversary.

Arrest of the Guru

However, four days before the great occasion came, Alam Khan Rohilla suddenly appeared with imperial order from Delhi and arrested him along with Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Gawal Das.[1]

According to one of the Buranjis[2], the orthodox Ulemas and Brahmins were much upset at the deep impact of the teachings and they complained to the Emperor that the whole atmosphere was being vitiated by the Guru. The Emperor, after examining the complaint, issued orders that the Guru should appear before him.

The Guru, however, did not pay heed to this and continued his work as usual. Thereupon the Emperor commissioned Alam Khan to effect the arrest of the Guru which he did on the day as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Forster Malcolm, Cunningham and Latif state that discomfitted in his efforts to attain Gaddi for himself, Dhirmal began to conspire with Ram Rai to devise some ways to bring about the ruin of Guru Tegh Bahadur and as a result of that, the Guru was summoned to Delhi—the view which is not supported by any sound evidence.

Intercession of Ram Singh and the Guru was set free

On being produced before Alamgir Aurangzeb at Delhi, the Guru was strictly examined and then handed over to Raja Ram Singh of Amber for custody and surveillance. Aurangzeb wanted to execute the Guru but through the successful intercession of Ram Singh, who took full responsibility of the Guru's good conduct, the Guru escaped punishment. According to Bhat Vahi Jado Bansian, Guru Tegh Bahadur remained in custody of Raja Ram Singh for a period of about one month. On December 13, 1665 (Poh 1, 1722 Bk.), the Guru was released and allowed to go anywhere. The Guru thereupon resumed his travel to different places in the east. The news of the Guru's release angered Aurangzeb who disapproved of this act of Raja Ram Singh which he considered as the violation of the terms of the custody.

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1. Bhat Vahi Jadobansian Khata Barrian as quoted by Dr. Fauja Singh in his book Guru Tegh Bahadur – Martyr and Teacher.
2. S.K. Bhuyan : *Badshah Buranji*, Sakhi 116.

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Mathura, Agra

The next important halt was Mathura, wherefrom he betook to Agra where there was already a very important Sikh centre built in memory of Guru Nanak's visit to the place. Here he stayed in the house of one old pious lady, *Mai Jassi* in Mai Than Mohalla of the city where now a Gurdwara exists in memory of the Guru's visit. From there, the Guru and his entourage moved on to Etawah, Kanpur, Fatehpur and reached Allahabad early in March 1666 A.D. It at was Allahabad that Mata Gujri got conceived. Next important halts were Mirzapur and Benaras. At Benaras the Guru stayed for many days. According to Dr. Fauja Singh "Like the other places, he had visited Benaras before more than once and felt quite at home among his devotees, chief among whom was Bhai Jawahri Mal." As the local tradition goes, the white horse, Sri Dhar, gifted to him by Saif Khan of Saifabad, fell ill and subsequently met his death at this place. Then the Guru moved to Sasaram where he met important Sikh missionary Phagu Shah who lodged the Guru in a beautiful new house which has since become a holy shrine.[1] Having visited Bodh Gaya, Rai Garh, the Guru reached Patna towards the end of May 1666 A.D.

Allahabad Mirzapur and Banaras

Sasaram

Patna

The heads of the Patna diocese, Ram Rai and Bhai Durbari made an excellent arrangement for the stay of Guru Tegh Bahadur and his family. A devout lady known as Mata Paidi looked after holy mother Nanaki, and Mata Gujri who was expecting a child. The Guru spent the early months of the rainy season (*Chamasa*) at Patna. During this period, he reorganised the missionary work in Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other neighbouring areas by placing all sangats of these areas under the unified command of Bhai Dayal Das who by his sincerity in the cause had risen very high in the estimation of the Guru. Sometime around the Dussehra festival, a few prominent Sikhs of Dacca waited upon the Guru and entreated him to visit and bless their area as well.

The Guru agreed to go with them atonce entrusting his family to the care of Patna Sangat.

The Guru proceeded to Dacca via Monghyr, Colgong, Sahibganj, and Kant Nagar. The last named place was subsequently wiped out by the floods and the inhabitants moved to a new site towards the north, now known as Lachmipur. Many

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1. This shrine is known by the name of Chacha Phagu's Sangat.

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pepole in this area still profess Sikh faith[1]. The prominent disciples who accompanied him were Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Baba Gurditta son of Bhai Budha. From Kant Nagar, the Guru reached Malda, a great Sufi centre. Here the Guru is believed to have stayed for more than a month during which he had exchange of ideas on many religious problems. The Muslim saints were much impressed by the piety and spiritual splendour of Guru Tegh Bahadur. From Malda, the Guru reached Dacca passing through among other such places as Godagari, Gopalpur and Pabna.

Dacca

Guru Tegh Bahadur reached Dacca at the end of October 1665 A.D. passing through Gedagari and Gopalpur. According to Teja Singh Ganda Singh "There flourished quite a net work of prosperous Sikh Sangats and ministries all over. From Raj Mehal in the west of Sylhet in the east, from Dhubri in the north to Bansbhali and Fateh Kachehri in the south, there was hardly a place of importance during the days of Moghul viceroyality where some Sikh temple did not exist or some Sikh ascetic (Udasi) had not established himself and gathered a number of followers around him. The movement had spread even to some islands like Sondip, as early as Shah Jahan's time. 'These Sangats were not only places of worship but as usual served the useful purpose of wayside inns where food and shelter were given free to the poor and indigent way-farers.[2] These Sangats had been well-organised by Almast and Natha Sahib. Dacca was the Hazuri Sangat or the head Sangat of these parts with a number of others under it and in turn was controlled by the Guru from Anandpur. Besides local Sangats, there were always a number of Sikh merchants from the Punjab and Sindh, who were always anxious to keep themselves connected with their spiritual guide. No wonder, the Guru received great respect from the people of Dacca whose association with the Sikh faith was as old as its founder Guru Nanak. Bhai Bulaki, the local masand and Bhai Natha, the disciple of Almast did all what they could do to make the stay of the Guru comfortable. The place where the Guru used to hold Durbar to give audience to the people is marked by a Gurdwara. Tradition has it that a big Jagir was later assigned to it by Nawab Shaista Khan the then Mughal governor of Bengal in token of his goodwill towards the Sikh Sangat. However, there is no reliable record of this jagir available. It was here that he received the welcome news of

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1. The memory of the Guru's visit is still fresh in the minds of the people, and pertaining to that memory, legends are still current among them.

2. Sikh Relics in East Bengal by G. B. Singh in the *Sikh Review*, July, 1915.

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News of the birth of his son

the birth of his son at Patna on December 26, 1666. He wrote a letter of thanks to the Sangat of that place for looking after his child. From this letter and others, it appears that there was no prospect of his return in the near future because he hoped that his family would continue to be looked after as before. From Dacca the Guru left for Jantia Hills and Sylhet (early in the year 1667 A.D.) where he established a missionary centre known as the Sylhet Sangat.[1] After spending the rainy season at Sylhet, Guru Tegh Bahadur moved south towards Chittagong and Sondip. He passed through Shairtaganj and stopped at Agartala, the capital of independent Tripura State. From here he went to Chittagong where he stayed towards the end of the year 1667 A.D.[2] During his stay at Chittagong he established a large religious centre of his faith (Sangat) which flourished as much that during the times of Guru Gobind Singh provided weapons and war material for the freedom fighters passing through Noakhali, Chandpur and Narayan Ganj. Guru Tegh Bahadur reached Dacca in 1668 A.D.

Chittagong

Meeting with Raja Ram Singh—Guru's Tour in Assam

In December 1667 A.D. the Ahoms captured Gauhati and Aurangzeb, in order to retrieve the lost prestige, resolved to despatch a strong contingent to oust the Assamese. Accordingly, Raja Ram Singh son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh was issued formal orders on January 6, 1668 to achieve the task, which was obviously very difficult, firstly, because the climate of Assam was not congenial for the soldiers to keep fit; and secondly, the Assamese were feared because of their command over black magic. To enthuse the soldiers and to build their morale, Raja Ram Singh took with him five pirs of Malda.[3] While reaching Dacca, the Raja, who had deep reverence for the house of Nanak and regarded Guru Tegh Bahadur a rich repository of spiritual power resolved to take Guru Tegh Bahadur along with him. Accordingly, he requested the Guru to accompany him.[4] Guru Tegh Bahadur who had already wished to have a tour of Assam accepted the request.

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1. Sylhet provided war elephants to Guru Gobind Singh.
2. *Guru Tegh Bahadur* by Dr. Trilochan Singh, p. 230
3. Shah Akbar, Shah Bagmar, Shah Saran, Shah Safi and Shah Kamal.
4. From a massucript document in possession of Mahant Bachitar Singh of the Gurdwara at Dhurbl, it is learnt that Rai Singh counted upon the Guru's ability, to undo the effects of the black arts for which Kamrup had a reputation all over India and which in the estimations of the Raja were sure to be against himself and his army." quoted from Dr. T.S. Guru Tegh Bahadur.

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Raja Ram Singh and Guru left Dacca some time in the middle of December, A.D. 1668 and reached Dhubri in February, 1669 A.D. Guru Tegh Bahadur camped at Dhubri while Raja Ram Singh camped at Rangmati, the Moghul outpost near the frontier of Assam.

War between the Mughal forces and those of Assam

Soon after, the war between the Moghul forces and Assamese forces ensued, Raja Indra Daman Singh was in command of Assam[1] Army of the Ahom King Chakradwaj. The Moghuls pressed their opponents hard but the decisive victory was not easy to get because of the difficult mountainous terrain, insolubrious climate, and heavy torrents during the rainy season which impeded the rapid movements of the Moghul forces, unacclamitised to the climate and the hurdles of the terrain. Moveover, the Assamese were determined to fight to the last drop of their blood to keep Guhati, the seat of their culture and Government, under their control. However, as the Sikh tradition goes, the witchcrafts, or sorcery of Kamrup women could not have any effect on the Moghul[2] soldiers because of the presence of the Guru in their camp. But the Guru and his Sikhs did not participate in the battle. The assertion of Cunningham that the Guru was fighting for Ram Singh or was employed by him is a pure fiction. Guru Tegh Bahadur's own letters give us clue about his movements.[3]

In the meanwhile, certain factors operated to bring about change in the moods of both the parties engaged in warfare. The reverses which the Ahom King had suffered, toned down his enthusiasm. Similarly, by now, the realities of situation had dawned on the Mughals also. Ram Singh was convinced that the attempt to have clear victory would mean a long drawn-out and desultory warfare which was neither advisable nor practicable. Moreover, Ram Singh received a letter from his widowed mother to the effect that the Padshah (Aurangzeb) contrived the death of Kishan Singh by making him fight with the tiger,[4] which naturally dampened his spirit.

Negotiated settlement

Sensing the change in the moods of the contending parties, Guru Tegh Bahadur strived for peace between the parties. His attempts brought fruit and a negotiated settlement was arrived at. According to the agreed terms of peace, the old boundaries were to be maintained.[5]

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1. History of Assam by Sir E.D. Gait, page 155.
2. Anglo Assamese relation by S.K. Bhuyan.
3. Assamese Records are very clear about it.
4. Letter of Raja Singh's widow as quoted by Dr. S.K. Bhyuan.
5. E. A. Gait: History of Assam, p. 155

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Maund

In token of complete harmony, the Guru invited the soldiers of both armies to join together and filling their shields with earth to raise a maund at Dhubri in memory of Guru Nanak. At the foot of maund, there stands a Sikh Temple, known as Damdama.

While in Assam the Guru also visited cooch Behar, Chander Bhanga, Kisen Ganj and Purnea.

The Guru left Assam

The Guru left Assam early in the year A.D. 1670. The Guru took a route different from the one he had travelled during his onward journey on account of the former being shorter. This being so, he travelled in the direction of Patna via Bangaigaon, Siliguri and Katihar.

The Guru was in hot haste to come to Punjab. The reason obviously was that during this period, there was a marked change in the socio-religious policy of Emperor Aurangzeb who adopted a much stiffer attitude towards the Hindus. On April 8, 1669, the Emperor, according to the Ma-a-sūi-i-Alamgiri issued orders to all the governors of provinces "to destroy with a wilting hand the schools and temples of the infidels, and they were strictly enjoined to put an entire stop to the teaching and practising of idolatrous forms of worship." According to De Graff "In the month of January 1670, all the governors and native officers received the order from the Great Mughal prohibiting the practice of pagan religion throughout the country and bring down all the temples and sanctuaries of idol-worshippers in the hope that some pagans would embrace the Muslim religion[1]." While this general order of the Emperor was having its effect in the country, the Sikhs also, according to Mohammed Hashim Khafi Khan's Mutakhab-ul-dubab, "had their share that is Emperor Aurangzeb having received information about them had ordered their deputies to be turned out and places of worship to be destroyed". As it has been told by Mirza Inayatulah Ismi, in the Ahkam-i-Alamgiri "the Sikh temple in the town of Buriya, in the parganah of Khizrabad of the Sarkar of Sirhind had been demolished and a mosque had been raised on its site.[2]"

Hurried return to the Punjab

The Guru did not pay visit to Patna for the obvious reason that he wanted to avoid delay. Instead, he sent Bhai Mati Das to bring his family to his camp. He, then, instructed his brother-in-law Kirpal Chand to take the family straight to Lakhnaur via Ayudhya, Lucknow Nanakmata and Hardwar, while he

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1. Refer to the Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors by Sri Ram Sharma.
2. Refer to the Research Paper entiled 'The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur's' by Dr. Ganda Singh.

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would join them at Lakhnaur having seen Rani Pushpa Devi, mother of Raja Ram Singh at Delhi. Immediately all the family of Guru Tegh Bahadur including child Gobind Rai left for Lakhnaur and according to Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi they arrived at the place on the 13th September, 1670[1] (Asu Sudi 9, 1727 BK.) The Guru reached Delhi on 20th June 1670[2] (22 Har, 1727 B.K.) and sojourned at Jaunpur, Ayudhya, Lucknow, Shah Jahanpur, Muradabad enroute. At Delhi The Guru was waited upon by Rani Pushpa Dev and her daughter-in-law (wife of Raja Ram Singh) who made their obeisance. The Guru informed that Raja Ram Singh had gained initial victories and would return shortly. On the way back to Delhi the Guru was arrested by the Kotwal of Agra but was soon released when it was made clear that the earlier order for the arrested no longer stood valid because of the intercession of Raja Ram Singh.

Delhi

Lakhnaur

Soon after, the Guru left for Lakhnaur via Rohtak, Kurukshetra and Pahewa. The Guru, at this time, was accompanied by Nawab Saif Khan who had been leading a hermit's life since A.D. 1669 and had met the Guru either in Assam or somewhere on the way back. The exact date of the Guru's arrival at Lakhnaur is not available, but it is almost certain that on the day of Dussehra, he was at Lakhnaur. It was on this auspicious day that the hallowed child Gobind Rai was seated on a cot and his elder maternal uncle Mehar Chand Subhikhi performed *Sirvarna* and Dastar ceremonies.

After a short sojourn at Lakhnaur, the Guru along with Bhai Dayal Das and Bhai Sadhu Ram left for village Malla to meet his elder sister Bibi Viro. The family, however, was instructed to stay at Lakhnaur till they were sent a message. From Malla, the Guru proceeded to Bakala. Shortly afterwards, he was joined by his family there. It is not possible for us to determine when the Guru arrived at Chak Nanaki but this much we can say on the evidence of Shahid Bilas of Sewa Singh that on March 29, 1672, Guru Tegh Bahadur was definitely present at Chak Nanaki where Bhai Mani Singh had the good fortune of paying his homage to the Guru.

SECOND TOUR OF MALWA AND BANGAR

About the middle of 1673 A.D. the Guru left for extensive tour of Malwa and Bangar Desh. Details of the tour are not available but according to Sakhi Pothi, the Guru spent nearly one and a half years on this tour. According to Santokh Singh,

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1. Bhat Vahi Multani Sindi Khata Jalhanon Baluton ka.
2. Bhat Vahi Talauda Pargana Jind.

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Gyan Singh of Twarikh Guru Khalsa, and Sakhi Pothi, the Guru visited thirty places but our findings are that he visited 104 places in Malwa and 24 places in Bangar. Exact account of anecdotes of his visit to different places is not known, yet a few have been recorded in Sakhi Pothi, Suraj Parkash and Twarikh Guru Khalsa. Guru Tegh Bahadur's important halts were Dukh-niwaran, Mulowal, Sekha, Hadiaya, Sohiwal, Dhilwan, Dikhi Saifabad, Maisar Khana, Ponderian, Alisher, Goga and Bhupali. Khiwa, Samaon Bhikhi, Khayala Maur, Talha Sahib and Talwandi Bhatinda, Sulisar, Bara, Bachhacha Gobindpura, Gaga, Gurne and Makrora.

Saifabad

At Saifabad, the Guru and his followers stayed for about four months. At Saifabad, the Guru thought it morally prudent in deference to the wishes of the chief of the place, Nawab Saif Khan.

Mulowal

At Mulowal, the Guru made arrangements for the supply of wholesome water by getting 9 wells sunk. According to local tradition, the brackish water of the well that was there before the Guru got wells sank, was made fresh and potable as if by a miracle. Triloka, the chowdhary of Sekha, did not pay heed to the Guru who cursed that the Sekha would suffer on account of the haughtiness and intransigence of its people. At Hadiya, the Guru was accorded hearty welcome. During his stay there, the Guru found that the village was in the grip of a terrific epidemic causing mortality by suffocation through the swelling of neck. They were asked to have a dip in the small pond[1] close by the water of which had some medicinal qualities for the cure of that epidemic. The people of Dhilwan received the Guru with great reverence. The Guru liked the place and stayed here for several months, and as the tradition goes, the Guru made arrangement for the supply of 101 cows to the people to enable them to alleviate shortage of milk. In the village of Dikhi, Ali Sher and Bhupali, the local panchayat and those of neighbouring villages accorded hearty welcome to the Guru and made offerings to him. One of the persons who came to pay homage to the Guru was Chundhari Jagraj with whom the Guru was specially pleased and to whom the Guru asked to found a new village on a particular maund.[2] After Bhupali, the Guru camped at Khiva. A person named Singha served the Guru so much and with such devotion that the Guru blessed him. His fellow-villagers in token of the appreciation of his service to the Guru doubled his share in all customary distributory of the village community.

Dhilwan

Khiva

1. The tank has been deepened and widened and a big fair is held every year.
2. Sakhi Pothi Sakhi 11, p. 14.

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Samnon

The next important place of sojourn was Samnon. It was here that the Guru was informed of the arrival of Sikh Sangat from Kabul. In honour of the visit of the Sangat, a special Diwan was held, where they offered to the Guru their precious presents. The meeting of the Sangat and the Guru was so soul-stiring that a peasant who was working in his fields nearby was deeply moved and he could find satisfaction only in offering all his cooked food, which he had just received from home, to the Guru and the Sikh Sangat. At the village Bhikhi, a local zamindar Des Raj (Desu) waited upon the Guru. The Guru advised him to remove the symbol around his neck which showed that he was a follower of Sakhi Sarvar. Des Raj promised to abide by the advice, but when he was taunted by his brothers-in-faith, he threw to winds the advice of the Guru and reverted to the old faith. He cast off the arrows given by the Guru as a mark of his benediction on him.

Bhikhi

Khayale and Maur

The Khayale and Maur villages were visited next. The people of both the villages gave warm reception to the Guru. At a small distance from Maur at a place now called Talhi Sahib, a huge function was organised in celebration of the Sikh Guru's anniversary. The function drew large crowds of people from far and near.

Talwandi

The next stoppage of the Guru was at Talwandi, now known as Damdama Sahib. The Guru was attended by a large number of people. This place was sanctified by the Guru in getting a tank dug. The Guru described this place as prophesied that this place would become a great religious centre in due course of time.

Bhatinda

From Talwandi, the Guru reached Bhatinda. The Guru stayed here for a period of nine days during which he enjoyed hunting in the thickly forests nearby. From Bhatinda, the Guru marched to Sulisar where a few rascals made an abortive attempt to steal horses. According to Sakhi 22 of Sakhi Pothi, the thieves were caught and hanged by the Sikhs. This thing struck lesson into the hearts of those people who made light of the Sikhs' presence.

Bachhona

Next important places to which the Guru paid visit were Bara and Bachhona. At the former place, the Guru stayed for the whole of the rainy season.

Gobindpura

From Bachhona, the Guru proceeded to Gobindpura and after a short stay there moved on to Gaga, Gurne and Makror. The Ranghars of Gaga misbehaved towards the Sikhs but they soon regretted and asked for Guru's pardon. According to Dr. Fauja Singh "to begin with, the Guru paid

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no heed to them but when they still followed his begging for forgiveness he excused them saying that their identity would ever remain un-impaired though they would never be an adequate match for the local Sidhu Jats who had always seen respectful towards the Sikhs. As a mark of their deep reverence for him, the Sidhus made offerings of potfuls of ghee and cotton sheets. They also fell under the spell of Guru's personality and entered into the fold of Sikhism.

Bangar

Shortly after, the Guru entered Bangar, which is just an extension of the Malwa Desh. The Guru had toured this area previously also and therefore he did not face much difficulty while threading his way through the region. The most important of the places visited by the Guru in this part of the country was Dhamdhan and he must have stayed here for a fairly long time. The Guru did his best to alleviate the sufferings of the people of this area. He caused many wells sunk which were really a boon to the people of that parched region. The Guru attracted large crowds who began to look upon the Guru as their saviour and emancipator.

Dhamdhan

During all his travels, the Guru identified himself with the people and their sorrows and sufferings and he did whatever he could do to provide relief to them. He felt that only those minds which are strong in moral fervour and spirit were capable of struggling against tyranny and injustice. Accordingly, the Guru exhorted the people to imbibe spiritual and ethical values, sink differences on the basis of caste and birth, give up all fear and to face tyranny with resolute calmness. The Guru's motto was 'frighten not, and fear not'. (Slok 16)

From the foregoing account of the travels of the Guru, some important inferences can be drawn. First, the tour was a great success as it left a deep impact on the people. Secondly the Guru took care to make personal contacts with the panchayats, Choudharis and elders of different villages. Thirdly, he organised big functions to bring together people from far and near to discuss problems of common interest from common platform. Fourthly, he established centres of Sikhism at various places, possibly to lend continuity to his mission. Fifthly, the Guru gave special attention to the zamindars of the area. May it be, he had come to realize that they were the natural leaders of the people and their conversion to his faith would facilitate his work of awakening and articulating the people so as to enable them to achieve higher standard of culture and civilization.

Sixthly, during the greater part of his travels, the Guru moved with a large following and received the homage of the

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people along with many offerings. This was particularly true during the later phase of his travels. This caused misgivings and panic among the official circle to the local news-reporters made axaggeratec', even distorted reports to the government regarding the movements and activities of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The fact that in the course of his tour the Guru conducted himself with dignity and authority lent some pleausibility to these reports with the result that subsequently the Guru was martyred on their basis.

Duration of the tour

As regards the duration of the tour, nothing definitely can be said. Probably, the tour lasted for a year and a half. It appears that the start was made about the middle of A.D. 1673 and it was not till the end of A.D. 1674 or the beginning of A.D. 1675 that the Guru with his large train of followers returned home.

MARTYRDOM OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR

Result of contradictions at conceptual and operational level

Guru Tegh Bahadur's matryrdom is such an event that did not take place suddenly; it was, in fact, the result of the contradictions that lay at the root of the conceptual frameworks and operational activities of the Sunni section of the Muslims and those of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Besides this, the hyper-sensitivity which was partly the product of over-zeal for the implementation of the Sunni policies and partly the psychological hurt which was caused by Emperor's inability to prop up the tottering jagirdari-based polity.

Ram Rai was no factor

The part played by Ram Rai, if at all there was any, was insignificant and certainly it was not a determining factor vis-a-vis the Guru's execution. As a matter of fact, Ram Rai played into Aurangzeb's hands whose influence on him was so deep that he felt pleasure in defecting from the Sikh ranks. When the decision of Guru's execution was to be taken Ram Rai was not consulted at all. Aurangzeb took the decision keeping in view his own policy and mission. There is no historical evidence that Ram Rai[1] had discussion with the Emperor on this matter before or after leaving Delhi for Pathan region.

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1. Mian Ahmed Shah, the author of Twarikh-i-Hind (1823) was the first historian who held Ram Rai alone rerponsible for the whole tragedy. Mufti Ali-uddin, author of Ibrat Nama and Bute Shah, author of Twarikh-i-Punjab also subscribed to this view. Bute Shah particularly tried to wash Aurangzeb's hands off the crime of showing him filled with excessive remorse after the execution (Badshah of degar kasan tasaf namadaid). The view is totally wrong in face of the positive evidence to the contrary. Ram Rai had openly expressed his suspicions of the Emperor's intentions in summoning the child Guru Har Krishan to Delhi. He offered condolence to Guru Har Krishan's mother on her son's death. He met Guru Tegh Bahadur at Delhi on his return from his eastern tour.

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However, to be clear about the factors which were responsible for the execution of the Guru, we will have to examine all relevent facts carefully.

Muslim unity undergoing stresses

The period of the Great Mughals was a period of religious stresses. As a matter of fact the orthorox Muslim religious unity suffered its greatest stresses during the period from A D. 1550 to A D. 1650. Many forces, some political and more religious, were conspiring to weaken the hold over Indian Muslims of Sunni orthodoxy.

Mughal Rulers were electic

The Mughals were, by ancestory, taste and conviction, seekers and electics in religion, characterstics which their political necessities and ambitions tended to confirm. Taimur showed greater respect to Sufi thinkers than to the Sunni Ulemas. Babar and his son were no religious bigot and accepted Shi-ism although outwardly while negotiating for the support of the Persian Shi-ite Safarids. Moreover, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Shi-ism in India enjoyed political patronage. In the Deccan, Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur (1469-1510) pronounced himself a Shia as did Burhan-ud-din of Ahmednagar and Qutab Shah cf Golcunda. In North India, Bairam Khan, the guardian and minister of young Akbar was a Shia with a large Perian Shia following who settled down in India.

Shi–ism

Furthermore, significant religious developments within the penumbra dividing Muslim from Hindu had softened religious acerbities in India. If from within Islam the mystics had appeared to reach out toward Hinduism, from within Hinduism, Kabir, Nanak and Chaitaniya with their condemnation of Caste, Hindu rituals and idolatory appeared to be reaching out toward Islam.

Muslim Mysticism

Important changes also occurred in the character of Muslim mysticism from Persia—the Shattri whose Shaikh Muhammed Ghawth was Humayun's spiritual preceptor, the Qadiri whose Shaikh Mir Muhammed was tutor to the Mughal prince, Dara Shikoh, and the Naqshbandi order, whose greatest luminary was Shaikh Ahmed of irhind. Members of the first two orders in particular were deeply influenced by the frankly pantheistic doctrines of the Spanish Muslim mystic. Ibn 'Arabi (1164-1240); they observed few of the restraints in expression characteristic of the earlier Chisti and Suharwardhi orders. What is more, their adherents were often intimately acquainted with Hindu mysticism.

Hindu Revival

Besides this, the Hindu revival which had been ushered in by the dawn of Bhakti movement had been gaining strength and

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the Hindus relieved of the initial shock of the Muslim conquest had started asserting once again.

No exclusive State support to the Sunnies till Aurangzeb

None of such challenges were exactly new to Sunni orthodoxy, what was new was the political climate in India in which they had to be met. Until Aurangzeb's time, the Sunnies could not be confident of the exclusive support and patronage of the ruling power.

Akbar came to an understanding with the Hindu Rajputs, who served to underpin his empire, and with policy reinforcing his own personal religious inclinations, set his face against Muslim orthodoxy. The orthodox were scandalized not so much by the presence of Islamic ideas and practices in the Indian Muslim community as by the absence of political support in resisting them. Nonetheless they did not relent and were always intent upon establishing their hegemony and eliminating all the factors which did not allow their notions to be consummated in practice. In A.D.1580, their sympathies were with Mirza Hakim and if they could not achieve success, it was because of the towering personality of Akbar the Great. Towards the end of Akbar's reign, they spared no effort to instigate Jahangir to rise against Akbar's religious policy. A critical examination of the factors that led to the revolt of Jahangir against his father would show how the Sunni Muslims formed the backbone of it. Sayyads of Burha helped him only when they exacted promise from Jahangir that when he ascended the throne, he would revise the liberal religious policy of his father and work according to the Sunni's concepts of things.

Although Jahangir was foiled in his attempt to snatch the sceptre from his father, yet the coterie that gathered around him did not melt away and on his accession they began to assert. Jahangir who had fallen under their spell partly out of political necessity and partly out of his conviction played into their hands at least for some time.

Muslim orthodoxy

The cause of orthodoxy had been continually buttressed by the great traditionalist Abdul-huqq al-Dihlvi and others. However, the greatest figure in the reaction against Akbar's religious policy and mystic's religious syncretism was Shaikh Ahmed of Sirhind (1564-1624) who, arguing from mystic experience itself against the patheism of Ibn Arabi' recalled Muslims to a fresh realization of the religious value of traditional observance. His followers were known as Naqshbandis. Shaikh Ahmed laid emphasis on two things : (i) Submission of laws, precepts and traditions (ii) distance from innovations (Rafi-i-Bidat). He reproved the use of reason in matters of faith, and held the opinion that if reason were

Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi

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sufficient the Great philosophers who had adopted reason as their guide should not have fallen in the melting pot of error. His theme was "as the mode of reason transcends the mode of sense, and, therefore, whatever is not perceived through the senses is apprehended by reason, in the same way the mode of prophecy transcends the mode of reason, for whatever cannot be apprehended of reason is known through prophecy and whatever transcending the mode of rational devotion does not demonstrate the divine truth, is a denial of the mode of prophecy." According to him he who wants to be a philosopher must belong to the company of Satan and, therefore, he will be a loser and will be disappointed. He believed "God sends his message through prophets in regard to His essence and attributes and in regard to actions whether they were in agreement with or against His Will." As the prophet is the vehicle of God's commands, obedience to him is equivalent to obedience to God. It follows that the true believers must confirm in thought, word and deed to the injunctions of practices of the prophet. It was on this ground that he condemned all types of innovations. Shaikh's condemnation of innovation was all-comprehensive and knew no exception. Shi-ism was an innovation which was worse than infidelity. It was, therefore, necessary to refrain from associating with the Shias. Shaikh Ahmed was fiercely hostile towards the Hindus, whom he regarded as infidels and considered nothing more pleasing to God than their humiliation and disgrace. He looked upon "the realization of the poll tax (Jazia) as a means of helping continuity and scorn upon infidels." He was unhappy over the Muslims adopting Hindu manners and customs—marriage ceremonies, funeral observances etc. Shaikh Ahmed declared them wholly reprehensible and worthy of rejection. He desired that the Muslims should live like the Arabs of the time of the Prophet, and should refuse to assimilate any of the ways of the vast majority of the non-Muslim inhabitants of India. In short, according to him, purification of faith through Quran and Hedith, as interpreted by the just and right-minded Ulema, a strict adherence to law and abandonment of all innovations, were the main principles of Islam which it was the bounden duty of all Muslims to follow. The Shaikh worked hard to propagate his views. He corresponded extensively with many prominent men and influential nobles belonging to different walks of life, and made every effort to propagate his views among them. His correspondents included Khan-i-Khanan Sikandar Khan Lodi, Mahabat Khan, Khani-Azam, Murtza Khan, Shaikh Farid Bukhari, Khan-i-Jahan, Qilich Khan, Sadr Jahan etc. Evidently, he, through these great personalities, acquired influence in the Court of Jahangir and no wonder his influence played great part in building the psych of Jahangir and then propelling him to order the execution of Guru Arjan Dev,

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the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. Murtaza Khan the Governor of the Punjab who put into execution of the order of Jahangir was a devout follower of the Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi.

The waxing influence of the Sunni party on the court waned to a great extent when Jahangir was awakened to the political imperative of keeping the non-Muslims particularly the Hindus with them. The influence of Nurjahan who was a votary of Mian Mir, the Sufi saint of Qadirya Order having full belief in liberal attitude towards the Hindus and other non-Muslims was also no less important for the dawn of new awareness on Jahangir. But the Shaikh did not relent and according to Dr. Tara Chand despite the action taken against him by Jahangir, Shaikh Ahmad's mission spread. The Shaikh died in A.D. 1624-5. The work was taken by his son, Masum, who took upon himself the work of the dissemination of the views of his father. He achieved wonderful success in his mission.

On Shah Jahan's accession to the throne, Masum redoubled his activities, probably because he was aware of the religious propensities of Shah Jahan. He was very successful in his mission and through his vigorious propaganda reaped a rich harvest of converts. Among his adherents was Aurangzeb who attended his lectures while he was the governor of Multan. Masum also grew fond of the prince and on the eve of his pilgrimage to Mecca predicted that in the struggle for the throne Aurangzeb would be victorious. He addressed a letter to Aurangzeb when he was appointed to lead the Imperial forces against Balkh, in which he expatiated upon the virtues of holy war (Jehad).

Muhammad Musum's son, Shaikh Saif-ud-din (B. 1639-40) was adopted by Aurangzeb as his preceptor and guide.

Orthodoxy had its full play during Aurangzeb

In this way, the orthodox mode of thinking had its full play during Aurangzeb's reign., who under its influence, tried hard to translate Shaikh Sirhind's ideas into action. Incidentally, these actions seemed to serve the political purpose as well. Aurangzeb could justify the murder of his brothers and the imprisonment of his father on ground of his plans to promote the cause of Islam. Moreover, by stopping the entry of the Hindus into government service, he could oblige the Muslims on a large scale in which fact secured the purpose of creating Muslim vested interest and of encouraging the Muslim orthodox reaction.

Remarks of Ikram and Rashid

The remarks of S. N. Ikram and S. A. Rashid are very pertinent in this respect. They say "Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi contributed largely to the swing of the pendulum from Akbar's

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heterodoxy to Aurangzeb's vigorous ultra-heterodoxy rather than a return to Babur and Humayun's policy of Laissez faire. The rhetoric and appeal of Shaikh's letters kindled religious fervour and resulted in a religious revival which took sometime to bear fruit which completely altered the history of this sub-continent."

Aurangzeb's religious policy—acme of orthodoxy

Aurangzeb, after ascending the throne, hastened to convince the orthodox Muslims in the empire of their having backed the right horse. He began with puritanic measures. In the second year of his reign he discontinued the celebration of Naurauz (first day of the Solar year). A few years later, music and dancing were prohibited. Jharokha Darshan was discontinued on the ground that it smacked of human worship. Severe punishments were awarded for anything that was construed by the theologians as violating the spirit and even letter of Islam. Permissible length of the beard was fixed at four fingers and offenders against this order were penalized.

But most of these restrictions were of a general nature and covered all communities. Non-Muslims were singled out for discriminatory treatment in four specified fields: public services, construction and repair of temples, conversion and taxation. Regarding the discrimination of the Government towards the Hindus in services, the remarks of Shri Ram Sharma are pertinent. He says that "towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign there was a small number of Hindus occupying the mansabs of 1000 and above, than the number of similar mansabdars towards the end of Shah Jahan's reign. But the decrease in number becomes still more significant when we take into account the increase in the total number of mansabdars which rose accordingly in the reign of Aurangzeb. In 1657 under Shah Jahan there were 8000 mansabdars in all, whereas in 1690 the number of mansabdars had risen to 14556 .....the percentage of the Hindus in the higher ranks of the state services could not have been more than 50 percent of what it was towards the end of Shah Jahan's reign."

Besides this, a carefully planned attack was launched prohibiting the construction and repair of temples. Even before Aurangzeb, in the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, there were several instances of destruction of temples, but then these occurrences were generally part of military operations. In 1659, the year of his coronation, he ordered that "no new temple should be allowed to be built although it was decided 'according to our common law' the standing temples should not be demolished."

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The Emperor became more and more aggressive with the passage of time. In A.D. 1666, the stone railing of the famous Keshav Rai temple of Mathura was raised to the ground by Imperial orders. In April 1669, he issued a general order for the destruction of all schools and temples of Hindus. "Orders were now sent to the governors of all the provinces that they should destroy the schools and temples of the infidels and put an end to their educational activities as well as the practices of the religion of Kafirs.[1] It was followed by the demolition of the temples on a large scale. In August 1669, the temple of Vishvanath at Banares was demolished. The temple of Gopinath in Benaras too, was destroyed about the same time. An attempt was also made to destroy the Shiva temple of Janganwari in Benaras, but the idea was somehow given up for the time being.

Similar destructions were ordered in the various Rajput States, Ajmer, Ujjain, Bengal and other provinces of the Empire.

Lest the order should go amiss, strict administrative measures were taken. He appointed officers in all the subdivisions and the cities of the Empire to enforce the regulations of Islam with the destruction of Hindu places of worship as one of their chief duties. The Qazis were actively associated with the new policy.[2] The officers were told that reports of destruction of temples would be looked upon as authentic only if they bore their seal and attestation.[3]

Sikhs also suffered along with the Hindus & other non-Muslims

Like other non-Muslims particularly the Hindus, the Sikhs too, according to Khafi Khan, came in for their share; their temples were being destroyed and their leaders externed. (Muntakhab-ul-Lubab ii 651-2) Mirza Inayat-Ullah Ismi tells us in the Ahkam-i-Alamgiri that in compliance with the orders of the Emperor and with the consent of the local qazi the Sikh temples in the town of Buriya in the parganah of Khizrabad of the Sarkar of Sirhind had been demolished and a mosque had been raised on its site.[4] Sayyid Zafar Darvesh was appointed in charge of that mosque to guide prayers and benedictions.

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1. Muraqat-e-Abul Hasan 202 as cited and translated by Sri Ram Sharma, The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperor (New York, 1962, p. 130).
2. S.S. Bal. Awakening the oppressed. Guru Tegh Bahadur's role and its reason- Article published in Sikh Review, Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom Tercentenary Number.
3. Muraqat-e- Abul Hasan 202, by Sri Ram Sharma op cit., p. 130.
4. Kalimat-i-Taiyyabat, p. 115.

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Some Sikhs attacked the mosque and killed the Darvesh. The Emperor rebuked the Qazi and his father who was the head of the police. According to Hari Ram Gupta, this sort of incidents had become a common occurrence.[1]

In the field of taxation, the policy of discrimination was launched with great vigour. Jaziya and pilgrimage taxes were re-levied. Custom duties on the Muslims were fixed 2.5 percent and in the case of the Hindus at 5 percent. It was ordered that in the lunar year, the Muslims should pay 2.5% and the Hindus 5% on the price of their cattle.

Equally pitiable was the condition of the non-Muslims in the matter of conversions. Islam being a missionary religion and the ruling Muslim community being in a minority, great importance had always been attached to conversion. However the tempo with which the campaign of conversion was launched was singular in Aurangzeb's reign. The fact that a deputation of Pandits appeared in the Darbar of Guru Tegh Bahadur in May, 1675 and complained of the government conducting a wholesale campaign of conversion is a historical testimony too strong to be lost sight of.

Shaky economic foundation

Another important factor which formed an important part of the texture of the mood and policies of Aurangzeb was that the economic foundation of the Empire was shaking. Jagirdari system on which the whole Mughal administration was built was suffering a serious crisis. According to the mansabdari system each mansabdar was a public servant and in his case appointment carried military obligations. He was required to keep a contingent of troops to be requisitioned by the Central Government, if and when necessary. For his own maintenance as well as for the maintenance of his contingent, he was granted a jagir which was not a grant of any law rights but only an assignment of revenue accruing from a particular piece of land as per assessment regulations of the Central Government. The system worked well for some time, possibly because of the moderation and sagacity of the mansabdars and of those at the helm of affairs. But sometime later, it began to suffer from cracks and the condition of the peasants became very deplorable. The reasons were not far to seek. The assessment of land being related to military obligations, the centre, in its anxiety to make the mansabdars keep large contingents, was often prone to over assessment of land.

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1. Rumbling of Imperial wrath and back to Makhowal—Dr. Hari Ram Gupta. Sikh Review, Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom Tercentenary Number.

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Contradictions between the interests of the Imperial administration and individual jagirdars

The Jagirdars would pass on the incidence of the over-assessment to the cultivators. Added to this, was the practice of frequent transfers of the assignees. This introduced an element of contradiction between the interests of the Imperial administration and the individual jagirdars "A jagirdar whose assignment was liable to be transferred any moment and who never held the same jagir for more than three or four years at the utmost, could never follow a far-sighted policy of agricultural development. On the other hand, his personal interest would sanction any act of oppression that conferred an immediate benefit upon him, even if it ruined the peasantry and so destroyed the revenue-paying capacity of that area for all time."

Sad plight of the peasants

The peasants suffered in another way also. It was the general law in the Mughal Empire that if any robbery occurred within the area of a jagirdari or a faujdar, he was obliged either to trace the culprits and recover the loot or to restore the lost property himself. It offered the officials an excuse to sack any village they chose to suspect resulting in untold misery for its people.[1]

To such circumstances as these, the peasants reacted differently. Some of them left their lands and migrated to fresh areas. Some migrated to the state of some neighbouring zamindars where condition of service was comparatively better—not because they were not exploited by the zamindars but because they were welcomed by the zamindar for his own selfish ends; some, the more daring among them, made common cause with men of similar persuasions and took to the loot and rapine. The villages and the areas which refused to pay taxes were known as Zortalab. Such villages were often protected by fortresses or forests or hills. In the case of such peasants' risings assuming large proportion, community of faith or caste acted as major rallying forces. This being so, it was but natural on the part of the government to be sensitive to the stirrings of the peasants, and the rallying forces.

Role of zamindars

In this connection, the role of zamindars was significant. These people were different from jagirdars. The jagirdars were appointed by the imperial orders but the zamindars by custom, had emerged as the leaders of villages and had small armies of their own. Moreover, the zamindars unlike jagirdars were often the leaders of caste or tribal groups and as such, they yielded considerable influence. Not unoften, their influence was utilized for the collection of the revenue, but with the lapse of time and especially during Aurangzeb when the seams appeared

1. Dr. Fauja Singh : Guru Tegh Bahadur—Martyr and Teacher.

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in the agrarian structure, the zamindars gained in stature and reputation with the result that the government and jagirdars began to apprehend danger that they might defy their authorities. The zamindars, on their part, were fully aware of the predicament the authorities were faced with as also the psychosis of the men in power. They spared no pains to pose themselves as the protectors and defenders of the peasants against official tyranny. According to Arfan Habib "As the number of stirrings of homeless peasants grew and the peasants took to arms themselves, it became possible for the zamindars to organise them into a still larger bands or armies for dismantling the Mughal Empire and expanding their Chiefships."[1]

Government could not tolerate Guru Tegh Bahadur

The Government committed to the Sunni views of Islam and determined to perpetuate tottering jagirdari-based economic structure even in face of serious contradictions could illbrook Guru Tegh Bahadur who was committed to refashion the society on Sikh principles and whose followers who were largely the peasants and in some cases zamindars, for the reasons adumbrated above, were seething with discontent.

Aurangzeb was motivated by religious considerations and not by political imperatives

Recently authors like Athar Ali have tried to prove that Aurangzeb's religious policy was motivated by certain political imperatives; it did not spring out of his religious convictions. He says "Aurangzeb, having killed his brothers and imprisoned his father, justified the seizure of the throne on the ground that he was more competent than his father. This he tried to prove through military successes but in or about 1666, it was clear that the reckless policy of expansion begun in 1659 had proved to be a complete failure. A new post-facto justification had to be found for his crime of 1658-9". And this justification was provided by an emphasis on the Islamic character of the Empire apart from the desire to resume his prestige on a new basis, other issues were also involved which impelled the Emperor to pursue the discriminatory policy in religious sphere. This policy was pursued to overcome the difficulties. So far as the empire was expanding, the nobility, as a whole, could satisfy its ambition by looking forward. Once, however, it became clear as it did in 1667, that any rapid expansion was not to be expected, the urge for promotions among the mansabdars could not be easily satisfied In such a situation, it must have been rightly tempting for the Emperor to enlarge the avenues of income for them and gratify the nobility by progressively ousting the Hindus including Rajputs from the jagirs.[2]

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1. Irfan Habib : The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1963), p. 193.
2. M. Athar Ali : The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb, pp. 98, 99.

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But our study leads us to conclude that the views of Athar Ali are not convincing. We understand as we have spelled above, that Aurangzeb did act under the influence of the Sunnie's reaction to which he himself subscribed and the chief exponent of which was the Shaikh Sirhindi.

It is not correct to say that after his failure to prove that he was superior to his father, he followed the Sunnie line to justify his stand and resurrect his impaired image. Aurangzeb's stance from the very outset was that of a Sunni Musalman, and most of his actions vis-a-vis the non-Muslims particularly the Hindus were rooted in the conceptual framework of the Sunnies. That he justified the murder of his brothers and the imprisonment of his father through the instrument of Sunnie policies does not prove anything except that he was politically sagacious and shrewd.

A few scholars obsessed with the idea of finding secularism in everything aver that Aurangzeb was extremely selfish and power-hungry and had no qualms for Islam and his policy, therefore, was to promote his own self-interest. He killed Sarmad and a dozen of other Sufis who were certainly Muslims. A careful study of the executions of these Muslims during his reign will show that all such Muslims were either liberal Muslims or the supporters of Dara or both. Sarmad was both a liberal Muslim and a supporter of Dara. Hence the conclusion is inevitable that Aurangzeb's policy towards the non-Muslims was what Sunnie thought warranted.

The policy of Aurangzeb clashed with Dharma ideology

The Guru, on the other hand, was against such a policy as it did not confirm to the Dharma ideology of the Sikhs according to which all human activities are legitimate provided they are based on and governed by Dharma. The such action, as do not answer the demands of the test of Dharma are wrong and lead to evil results. Dharma ideology in the context of social and political reconstruction meant social responsibility or imbibing of moral values, social equality transcending narrow or exclusive considerations of creed caste, cline, sex and colour, rejection of hereditary principles as the basis of social order or ethics. The precept of justice formed important fact of Dharma ideology. The precept of justice figured prominently in the thinking of the Gurus. The scientific socialism as it developed in the West in the 19th century and as we understand was not known then, but justice as a principle of human relations was well known and was by Nanak and his successors strongly advocated. As a matter of fact, their close identification with the lower and down-trodden classes and their constant endeavours for their welfare and upliftment were conceived in a desire to plead for social justice. Similarly, the

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exploitation of the poor by the rich was held inhuman and unjust. The concept of justice propounded by the Gurus extended to the political sphere as well, where it was regarded as the very basis of government and administration, while the actions of perpetrators of exploitation, injustice and tyranny were exposed and criticised and appeals made to their good sense and reason to mend themselves and the sufferers at their hands were exhorted to conduct themselves with self-respect and fearlessness. The cheap and senseless imitation on their part of their rulers, ways, with no other object than that of placating them, was exposed as an act of passive submission to a tyrant and was dubbed an act of shameful cowardice. Compromise with injustice or tyranny was thus shown as a great evil and fearlessness and heroism a great virtue. In the fight between good and evil, God's support, it was assured, would be always on the side of good, for he is verily the smiter of the evil and the wicked and since time immemorial has been the unfailing protector of the good as against their enemies. "In all *jugas* He has been creating saints and in all *jugas* they have been protected by Him. Harnaksh, the tyrant was smashed by Him and Prehlad the victim saved. Moreover, the ethical principle involved in the fights of the famous Hindu heroes like Rama and Krishna was accepted. Each one of them had to fight against evil and each one of them gained victory through the help of God. The Sikh devotees, themselves were presented as '*Mall*' or Pehalwanra (wrestler) in the wrestling bouts between good and evil by Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

The ideas of the Guru attracted the people of all shades

The ideas of the Gurus held great attraction for the Hindu trading class who found in them an adequate answer to the Brahmanical exclusiveness and rigidity as well as a Catholicity of outlook which could enable it to build up harmonious relations with the Muslim rulers in the interest of their economic benefit. These ideas also presented opportunities to the lower classes like jats to improve their social status. The result was that the Sikh Movement grew rapidly in both number and resources. The growing popularity of the movement alarmed both the Muslim rulers and orthodox Brahmins. The formet being of the ruling community, their hostility mattered most. The Mughal Government, prompted by the Muslim orthodox section, began to view the Sikh Movement with deep suspicion.

The martyrdom of the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev on one hand, the hostility of the Government towards the Sikhs on the other hand, forged formidable challenge and the Sikhs must try to be able to survive. Guru Hargobind reacted to this situation in the manner of a hero determined to hold aloft the banner of Dharma. His war with the Mughals was in the true spirit of

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Dharmyudh. His successor Guru Har Rai was similarly inspired when he led his troops to the bank of river Sutlej in order to block the passage across the river of Aurangzeb's troops marching in hot pursuit of Dara Shikoh. The moral issue was very clear. Dara symbolised the forces of good whereas his adversary Aurangzeb unleashed tyrannical policy of religious intoleration. Guru Tegh Bahadur felt called upon to denounce it and to campaign against it in the true spirit of Dharmyudh tradition coming down to him from his illustrious predecessors. Guru Gobind Singh in his famous writing 'Bachittar Natak' has beautifully depicted the Dharma character of Guru Tegh Bahadur's Martyrdom:

"The Lord (Guru Tegh Bahadur) protected their paste mark and sacred thread
And performed a mighty deed in the Kali age.
To protect the good he spared no pains,
Gave his head but uttered not a groan,
For the protection of righteousness he did his noble deed,
Gave his head but not his ideal."

Moreover what Guru Gobind Singh meant by the word Dharma comes out very clearly from what he said about his own mission in the same work:

For this purpose am I born into the world,
For Dharma's sake I am sent here by Lord
Ordained to promote Dharma here and there
And to demolish the wicked and the evil-minded
Let all good people understand that I am born for this purpose:
To promote Dharma, to protect the good, to extirpate the evil.

The Guru did not court martyrdom for the Hindus

In view of this, it is wrong to presume that the Guru courted martyrdom in order to protect Hindu religion alone. The special mention of 'Juga and Tilak' the distingushing marks of the Hindus has been made only to highlight the point that the Hindus were the main targets of the tyranny of the Government, and in no case the conclusion can be drawn that the Guru's main or soul objective was to protect the Hindu religion.

In fact, the Guru Tegh Bahadur's struggle was against 'Adharma' the greatest epitome of which was Aurangzeb and the Sunnie character of his Government. To achieve his purpose

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His struggle was against *Adharma*

the Guru propagated his mission among the people. During his tour in eastern parts of the country, in the Bangar and in the Malwa region of the Punjab, the Guru's message brought new awakening among the people who began to rally round the Gurus. The conceptual framework and methods of operations conforming to that were sharply different from the conceptual framework of Aurangzeb. The clash was inherent in the circumstances.

New awakening among the people

Exaggerated Reports of the intelligencers

But how did the matter come to head ? Knowing the mind and the official orders of Emperor Aurangzeb, the imperial intelligencers seem to have been closely watching the movements and proceedings of Guru Tegh Bahadur since his return to the Punjab. The Sikh movement, as history knows it, had been looked upon with suspicion and disfavour ever since the accession of Emperor Jahangir to Mughal throne. In A.D. 1665, the Guru was hauled up at Dhamdhan and was allowed to proceed on his tours to the east and north-east only after Raja Ram Singh had given surety for the Guru's conduct. As it is well known that the Emperor's attitude towards the leaders of non-Muslim faiths, especially after 1669, became very hostile, the royal intelligencers and news-reporters were encouraged to interpret the large gatherings and money-offerings at the congregation of the Guru as a dangerous augmentation to the influence and resources like those of Hafiz Adam of Banoor—a religious leader of the Pathans—whom Emperor Shah Jahan had in 1632 banished from India on account of his activities.

Views of Ghulam Hussain

How far misrepresentation could go may be evident from what the author of Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin Ghulam Hussain, has written on the subject "This man (Tegh Bahadur) finding himself at the head of so many thousands of people, became aspiring and he united his concerns with one Hafiz Adam, a Muhammadan faqir, these two men no sooner saw themselves followed by multitudes implicity addicted to their chief's will, than forsaking every lovest calling, they fell to subsisting by means of coercion and extortion, laying waste the whole province of the Punjab."

Malcolm and Cunningham

Malcolm and Cunningham basing their conclusions on the information supplied by the author of Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin has written: "Choosing for his haunts the waste between Hansi and Sutlej, he subsisted himself and his disciples by plunder."

It has also been alleged by some scholars that the Guru encouraged the refractory elements of the country to enter his service and prepared the people in general for a rising against the Government. But before anything substantial could be achieved he was overpowered, taken captive and brought to

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Delhi under a strong military escort. The statement has been rejected. Macauliffe and I.B. Bannerjee and many other scholars have said that Guru being just a Tyagi, a lover of meditation and solitude could not have done all this. We do not approve of their approach as it ignores the heroic and warrior aspect of Guru's personality. As a matter of fact, the Guru was a supreme embodiment of both Bhakti and Shakti in the manner of his great father.

Ghulam Hussain's statement is inaccurate

The most effective manner of repudiating the views of Ghulam Hussain is on the basis of historical facts and the tenor of Dharma-ideology of the Guru. The statement of Ghulam Hussain suffers from serious factual inaccuracies. The Guru did not make common cause with Adham as he could not do it because the *faqir* had since long left India for Medina and passed away (1642). The Guru even on his own did not raise any special army to come into clash with the Mughal Government.

Ghulam Hussain's another statement, companions were mendicants

In fact the Guru had neither the intention nor the means of leading any insurrection against Emperor Aurangzeb. The author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* admits in unambiguous words that "The companions of Tegh Bahadur moved about like mendicants. The wearing of swords and arms was not customary among them." And the rebellion could not be expected to succeed against the great Mughal Empire without a strong trained army equipped with necessary arms.

No coercion no extortion

It is possible that the Guru had a few of the persons from the army of Guru Hargobind. But certainly these persons did not insist on 'extortion or coercion' of the people. Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai maintained their armies out of their devotees' offerings, could Guru Tegh Bahadur not do so? Besides this, 'coercion and extortion' even in special circumstances and as a means to righteous ends, did not fit in with the essentials of Dharma as understood by the Sikhs. Coercion and extortion imply unprovoked aggression on less strong people. Could we be justified in believing that the author of the slogan 'fear not and frighten not' aggressed against un-offending people to secure subsistence for his militia even assuming that there was no other evidence in the form of his own writing and Sikh tradition to prove that he did not. Apart from the substantial body of his poetry incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib, we nave available to us a large number of Hukamnamas which deal with secular matters but nowhere the Guru had betrayed the compromises for worldly requirements if he had made any.

Dr. Fauja Singh's remarks in this connection are very pertinent "In a situation such as this where the cause had such

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The Guru's motif was neither political nor personal

a wide appeal there was and should be no need of resorting to coercion and extortion as a means of subsistence. Living on the contrary in that case would have the only interpretation that it was just an acceptance of voluntary offerings (Ugrahi)." There is no doubt that thousands of people, when he travelled in Malwa and Bangar, swarmed round the Guru but they cannot be taken as soldiers of revolt. No contemporary record shows that there was any outbreak of revolt on the part of the Sikhs, although under the impact of the Guru's preachings, the process of mass awakening had set in. The Guru's motif in doing so against the Mughal Government was neither personal nor political power nor subsistence by coercion and extortion as stated by *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin* but was preparing the people for the protection of righteousness (Dharamyudh) against the tyrannical (Adharmik) policies of Aurangzeb.

THE STORY OF KASHMIRI PANDITS

On May 25, 1675, a deputation of sixteen Brahmins headed by Kirpa Ram son of Arhu Ram reached Chak Nanaki (Anandpur). They waited upon the Guru and told him how keen Aurangzeb was to convert the land of Kashmir into the land of Muslims, and in obedience of the *firman* of Aurangzeb how cruelly Iftikhar Khan, the Governor of Kashmir, was implementing the contents.

There is a strong tradition that Guru Tegh Bahadur, on hearing the heart-rendering tale of Kashmiri Pandits, was deeply absorbed in pondering over the problem. Suddenly, the young Gobind entered the Durbar and was astonished at the complete silence reigning everywhere. After a brief pause, he quietly enquired from his father as to the cause of this silence. The Guru explained to the boy the agony of the Pandits and significantly remarked that the only way was that some great person should make supreme sacrifice. Instantaneouly, did the boy ask his father whether there was anybody more worthy of this sacrifice than he himself. The hint was very clear. The Guru appreciated the bold and courageous reply of his son and forthwith decided to offer himself for the sacrifice. He told the Brahmins to go to their homes and tell the authorities that they would have no objection to changing their religion if Guru Tegh Bahadur was first prevailed upon to embrace Islam.

Issue of Kashmiri Brahmins was not the cause

From this, the conclusion was drawn by some historian that the Guru made up his mind to suffer martyrdom for them or for the Hindu religion alone. The protagonists of this view quote Guru Gobind Singh in their support. 'Guru Tegh Bahadur did a miracle in the Kali Age by protecting the frontal mark and sacred thread of the Sikhs'. But this view is unfounded

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To regard the appeal of the Kashmiri Brahmin as the sole cause of the Guru's execution is to misjudge the real cause of the Guru's execution as also to circumscribe the width of the Dharamyudh ideology. The truth appears to be that the advice of the Guru to Kashmiri Brahmins brought the matter to the fore. The process of speading Sunnie ideas and converting the people to it, particularly in the places contiguous to north-western frontier and Punjab where the orthodox section of the Muslims was the strongest, received a severe jolt and set-back at the hands of the Guru.

The intelligencers reported all this to the Emperor. Busy as he was in quelling the Pathan rebellion in north-western frontier[1], he had neither the time nor perhaps the inclination to make extensive enquiries about the proceedings of the Guru. He was, as we know, already suspicious of the Sikh Movement, which his grandfather, Emperor Jahangir, wished to put an end to at one stroke and which it was in keeping with his policy and orders "to put down the teachings and public practice of the religion of these mis-believers." He, therefore, readily believed all the reports of his intelligencers and wrote to the governor of Lahore to arrest Guru Tegh Bahadur and ordered that he might be fettered and detained in prison."[2] The Lahore governor passed on the imperial order for compliance to Dilawar Khan, the faujdar of Sirhind, who in turn asked the circle Kotwal of Ropar, Nur Muhammad Khan Mirza, in whose police jurisdiction lay Anandpur to arrest the Guru. The order, however was kept secret[3].

Order of Aurangzeb

The Guru, apprehending all this, conferred guruship on his son on 8th July, 1675. According to *Bhat Vahi* Talauda Pargana Jind and *Guru Kian Sahkian*, the Guru performed the installation ceremony by offering the usual marks of Guru-ship: a Tilak on the forehead, 5 pice and one cocoanut. Having done, the Guru voluntarily left Chak Nanaki on 10/11 July 1675. He was accompanied by Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dayal Das. It is not precisely known as what prompted the Guru to leave Chak Nanaki. Irvine basing his inference on the information furnished by *Ferukh-Siyar Nama* says that the Guru

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1. On the 17th April 1674, Aurangzeb had to leave Delhi for Hasan Abdal where he reached on the 26th June, 1674. The purpose of the Emperor was to restore Imperial prestige in the Pathan land from Qandhar to Attock where the different tribes had defied the Mughal authority, had risen in open revolt against it. Aurangzeb stayed there from June 1674 to Dec. 1675.
2. *Siyar-ul-Mutakhkhirin.*
3. Irvine : *Later Mughals*, i, p. 79; Mohammad Ahsan Ijad's *Ferrukh-Siyari Nama*, f. 13 a.

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intended to proceed to the Ganges to bathe. However, the probable view is this that the Guru hoped to see Emperor at Delhi, plead the case of the non-Muslims with him, and in the event of the Emperor's unfavourable reaction suffer the consequences.[1]

As the Guru arrived at Malikpur Rangharan near Ropar on his way to cross the Sutlej for his onward journey, he was arrested by Mirza Nur Muhammad Khan, the Kotwal of Ropar, on July 12, 1675 (Sawan 12, 1732 BK) and sent to the faujdar's headquarters at Sirhind where he was detained in prison.

The Guru was kept in prison for about four months by faujdar Dilawar Khan waiting for further orders from the Emperor who was at Hasan Abdal at that time or from the governor at Delhi. According to Sarup Das, the author of Guru Kian Sakhian (Sakhi No. 26) Guru Tegh Bahadur was kept in prison for over three months and was despatched to Delhi in an iron cage on receipt of a parvana from the Imperial headquaters. The Guru reached Delhi on Maghar Vadi, 1732 BK. The Guru was kept in the Kotwali of the city under the instruction of the subedar of Shah Jahanabad who had acted as per instructions from Aurangzeb at Hasan Abdal.[2]

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1. The Emperor at that time was in the north-west frontier considering the difficulty of communication in that age, it is not surprising that the Guru had no idea about the exact whereabouts of the Emperor. The normal expectation was that he would be at his capital, Delhi.

2. That the Emperor was not physically present at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom has been proved by the positive evidence of Ma a Sir-i-Alamgiri written by Saqi Masta a d Khan serving in the administration of Aurangzeb. This was the best primary source for the study, other contemporary sources being not very useful as Alamgirnama covers only ten years of the reign of Aurangzeb Muntakhabul-lubab contains no reference to the Guru Khulasat-ut-Twarikh, makes a very brief reference to the Guru's martyrdom Ma a Siri Alamgiri gives the dates on which the emperor left Delhi for Hasan Abdal and returned from there:—

   (i) The Emperor started on 7th April 1674, 11 Muharrani for Hasan Abdal on Friday, the 26th June, he reached Hasan Abdal.

   (ii) On Thursday the 23rd December 1675, 15th. Shawaal began the return journey from Hasan Abdal. The first stage was Kala bagh .....The emperor reached the garden of Lahore on Friday, the 21st January 1676.

   (iii) On Thursday the 24th February 1676, the emperor left Lahore.....on Monday, the 27th March 1676, the emperor arrived at Delhi (original text, p. 153 and English Translation J.N. Sarkar, p. 94).

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Baseless interesting anecdotes

Our writers have narrated many interesting anecdotes about this period many of which cannot stand the test of historical scrutiny. One of the writers refers to the meetings between Aurangzeb and the Guru and narrates graphically what transpired between them. But the whole story cannot be authenticated because Aurangzeb, at that time, was at Hasan Abdal. All the same, the tradition has a sure basis, but relates to the earlier occasion when in A.D. 1665, the Guru was arrested from Dhamdhan[1] and produced at the Imperial Darbar at Delhi

Another story is narrated regarding the escape of the Sikhs, particularly Bhai Gurditta and Bhai Uda from the prison. "On witnessing the martyrdom of Mati Das, the Guru's other Sikhs became sore afraid. They went to him at night and represented their danger. He told them that they were free to leave them. They pointed to the chains of their feet and asked how their release could be effected. Through the Guru's miraculous interception, their fetters fell off, the prison doors all stood upon open and the guards snored in the sleep of neglect."[2]

It is said that at this juncture, Bhai Gurditta and Bhai Uda escaped. According to still another version, the Guru helped in the escape of some of his Sikhs because he wanted to send through them a message to his son at Chak Nanaki. As the account goes they were instructed to carry the insignia of Guruship to Chak Nanaki to effect on his behalf to his son.

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1. There are different views regarding the place of arrest. According to Mehma Parkash, the arrest was effected at Dhamdhan; according to Bansavli Nama at Malikpur, according to Koer Singh Kalal and Sukha Singh at Delhi and according to Santokh Singh's Gurpartap Suraj Granth and Gian Singh; Panth Prakash and Twarikh Guru khalsa and Macauliffe's Sikh Religion at Agra. He held that the Guru was arrested at Dhamdhan for the first time, at Agra for the second time and at Malikpura finally. Refer to Bhatvahi Joda Bansian Khata Bartian, and Bhatvahi Talauda Pargana Jind. Regarding the arrest at Agra it was effected while the Guru sojourned at Agra on his return from Eastern tour by the local kotwal under the wrong impression that the earlier order of Aurangzeb to arrest the Guru at Dhamdhan still stood, and that was the reason that the Guru was set at liberty. (See G.T. Bahadur—Teacher and Martyr). The story that the Guru sent a shephard-boy to the bazaar with gold coins to make purchases on his behalf so that he might arouse suspicion among the people and on inquiry might disclose the identity of the Guru to the Kotwal of the city is not true : Firstly because the Guru was not such a person as to need such strategeurs to disclose his identity and secondly the Guru was well aware that the seat of Government was Delhi and not Agra during Aurangzeb's time. Besides in the presence of the solid evidence that the Guru was arrested at Malikpur the afore-referred story stands nowhere.
2. Macauliffe's: *Sikh Religion* p. 383. The account is essentially based on Bhai Santokh Singh's *Suroj Parkash*. Ras xi.

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All these accounts do not stand the test of historical methodology. There were only three men arrested along with the Guru and they were all executed, and hence the question of helping others—even to Bhai Gurditta and Bhai Uda does not arise. Again the content of the story suffers from serious drawbacks and is un-Sikh like. To give credence to the display of miracle by breaking the fetters of the Sikhs in prison is positively against the Sikh ethos. Similarly the story that the Sikhs were sent to Chak Nanaki to offer the insignia of Guruship falls to the ground, because the Guru had performed the nomination of his son, Gobind Das, as his successor prior to his departure from Chak Nanaki.

Two Sloks

However, it is agreed that there was some communication between the Guru and his son, although it was extremely difficult. One such example was the exchange of two Slokas. Guru Tegh Bahadur wrote to Guru Gobind Singh :

"All power shattered, humanity in fetters, availeth nothing at all. Nanak prays, 'O save all' as thou saved elephant on drowning call."

Guru Gobind Singh, in reply, uttered :

"With power, fetters break, availeth all in grace Divine. All is Thy hand, O Lord, Nanak seeks aid Divine."

Almost all Sikh writings on Guru Tegh Bahadur make a reference to these Slokas and give different interpretation of them. Of those Dr. Trilochan Singh's interpretation which is based on Bhai Mani Singh's evidence, seems nearest to truth. According to him, Guru Tegh Bahadur in his Sloka expressed his deep concern over the helplessness of the people, whereas Guru Gobind Singh in his reply expressed his confidence to handle the situation with God's grace.

Eight days in kotwali

During the eight days in Delhi Kotwali different types of tortures were inflicted on the Guru. On the first day of the Guru's arrival at Delhi that is to say, on Thursday, Qazi Abdul Wahaab Vora offered the Guru three alternatives viz: (i) To show miracles, or (ii) to embrace Islam, or (iii) to prepare himself to court death. He refused to show miracles at it was contrary to Sikh faith. He also refused to accept Islam. He, however, chose the last alternative. On Friday and Saturday, the attempts were made to persuade the Guru to show miracles or accept Islam. Persuasions having failed, coercion was employed to make the Guru agree to one of the two alternatives. During the next four days, the Guru was subjected to severest tortures: burning sand was poured on his body; he was not allowed to drink water. Thursday, the 11th November, 1676 was the fateful day. The Guru's three dearest disciples and companions

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Mati Das, Dayal Das and Sati Das were persecuted to death. Bhai Mati Das was tied to two poles and sown asunder. Bhai Dayal Das was boiled alive to death in a cauldron of hot water and Sati Das was roasted alive with cotton wrapped round his body. Even this could not shake the Guru.

When the authorities saw that the Guru was adamant and impeccable, they ordered the executioner Jalal-ud-din of Samana to sever the head from the body. In a split of second, it was done. According to Muhammad Ahsan Ijad "When brought to the court (at Delhi), he (Guru Tegh Bahadur) refused to become Muhammadan and was executed." In the words of the contemporary scholar Munshi Sujan Rai Bhandari of Batala, the author of the Khulasat-ut-Twarikh, completed in 1697 "Within twenty-two years of the great event Guru Tegh Bahadur having been kept in prison by the Ameers of the kingdom was executed under the orders of the Emperor Alamgir in 1086 (al-Hijri, corresponding to the 17th Alamgiri) (Nov. 11, 1675 A.D.).

As per order of the Government the Guru's body was to be quartered and exposed to public view, obviously to impart stern warning to all such people as dared to go against the wishes and orders of the Emperor. But because of agility and timely action of Sikhs, this could not be done. According to Bansavali Nama,[1] a furious storm raged immediately after this brutal deed was accomplished. In the confusion caused by it, a man, named Jaita, the resident of Dilwali Gate Delhi, dashed out of the crowd and instantaneously disappeared with the holy head of the Guru. He shared his secret with his neighbour Bhai Nanu, the son of Bhai Bagha. Bhai Uda the resident of Ladwa was also taken into confidence. All the three decided to take the Guru's head to Anandpur. They placed the holy head in a basket which was covered over carefully and started their journey to their destination. They made five halts on the way. Their first halt was at Bagpat, the second at Karnal, the third at Anaj Mandi (Sis Ganj Ambala), the fourth at Nabha Sahib (near Chandigarh) and the fifth at Kiratpur. They left Delhi early in the morning of the 13th November and reached Kiratpur on the 15th November, 1675. From there the head was taken to Anandpur with full honour and cremated there with proper ceremonies[2] on the 16th November, 1675. Gurdwara Sis Ganj marks the place where the hallowed head was cremated.

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1. Samvat Sataran Patti Maghar Sudi Panjmi Aahei. Siri Guru Tegh Bahadur ji uth gei Dargahei, Tis Din Andheri, Gardh Gubari Rahi
(Bansavali Nama)

2. Bhatvahi Multani Sindhi (Punjabi University, Patiala).

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When Lakhi Shah Lubana[1] who was a famous contractor of Delhi and had a deep faith in the Guru was informed of the martyrdom of the Guru by Uda Singh, he felt much concerned. Bhai Uda and Lakhi Shah made a plan to get hold of the sacred body. Lakhi Shah, being a renowned contractor, was well known among Muslim officials and did not arouse suspicion of any kind. He emptied his carts laden with lime near the Red fort and went in retreat to his home in village Rakabganj.

On the way, taking advantage of the darkness and the carelessness of the Mughal sentries, Lakhi Shah, helped by his sons, Nagahiya, Hema and Harhi, and Dhuma son of Kanha whisked the sacred body away on Maghar Sudi 6, 1732 Bikram, November 12, 1675 in one of their carts to their home.

Apprehensive of the Government reprisal, Lakhi Shah and his sons then built up a pyre inside their house and set fire to it the same evening. A little after dark, it is said, that a police party did arrive at the scene in search of the body, but finding the house consigned to flames and the inmates weeping bitterly, returned. After the cremation was over, the ashes were collected and put in a metal vessel called 'gagar' and buried on the spot.

IMPORTANCE OF MARTYRDOM

The Ninth Guru's martyrdom had far-reaching consequences. The Guru's was a bid, more conscious than powerful, which was made to instil among the aggrieved the spirit of manliness to rise against their oppressors. No doubt, no immediate success was possible, but the heroic manner the Guru sacrificed his life, blazed a new trail in so far as it was a commitment to an open struggle against the organised oppression of the state. The execution eliminated, possibility, if any, of an honourable settlement with the Imperial Government. After that, it was clear that unless the Sikhs were prepared to go under, they had to wage a struggle against the aggressive fanaticism and oppressive administration of the Mughals under Aurangzeb. The first course of going under was ruled out, almost instinctively, by the kind of training the community had received in the past. Selecting the second course as the only one compatible with the honour and mission of Nanak and his successors, Guru Gobind Singh plunged himself into the prepa-

No possibility of honourable settlement

1. *Bhat Vahi* Jado Bansian Khata Barhtion Kanoton ka. Lakhiya beta Godhuka, Nagahiya Hema Harhi bete Lakhiya ke Barhtiya Kanaunt, Naik Dhuma beta Kanhe ke Bijlaut Guru Tegh Bahadur ji Mehl Naven ki loth uthae Lae, Sal Satrai Sai Battis Mangsar Sudi Chhat Shukarwar ko Dag diya Aadh Ghari Rahti.

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Organizational Changes

ratory measures for the inevitable struggle of the future. In this context, various vital concepts were streamlined, elaborated and concretised. The organisation of the Sikhs too underwent great changes. The idea of Dharmyudh which was implicit was made explicit and a complete theory of struggle (Dharamyudh) was evolved with a view to explaining its aims and boosting the morale of the participants.

Idea of 'Dharamyudh'

Inflamed the right-thinking persons

Whereas Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom marks the high water mark of the determination of the Guru to suffer for his lofty aims, it exposed the barbarious character of the Sunnie state headed by the Sunnie Muhammedans. Its obvious result was that the Guru's sacrifice inflamed all right-thinking persons. Gokal Chand Narang writes, "In his death, the Guru surpassed anything that he had done in his life. He was known throughout upper India, was highly revered by Rajput princes, and was actually worshipped by the peasantry of the Punjab. His execution was universally regarded by the Hindus as a sacrifice."

Popularity of Sikh Religion being a creative response

This type of reaction among the people increased the popularity of the Sikh Religion. The people began to look upon it as a creative response to the various challenges they were to reckon with. Almost all the sections of society liked the Sikh Religion. The down-trodden Hindus found in it the much-needed liberation, as it did not recognise exploitation on the bases of caste, birth and wealth etc. Workers liked it for its bias in their favour. Peasants found in it the solution to their problems since, in its social content, it was anti-feudal or anti-jagirdari. The emerging merchant class also liked it because firstly it was anti-feudalistic and secondly it was against social taboos, as these being impediments to the social mobility did not cater to the interests of the merchant class.

Creation of the Khalsa

As the execution of the Guru Tegh Bahadur strengthened the resistance against Aurangzeb's policy, it prepared the way for the final stage in the evolution of the Khalsa. This event convinced the Guru that the tyranny had myriad layers and in order to end it, all-out effort would have to be made. He had to forge instrument to achieve this purpose. With this end in view, he inaugurated the order of the Khalsa, a brotherhood of the persons committed to ending the tyranny of all kinds, even to employ force as last resort. But certainly, the permission to the Khalsa to use force should not be confused with imbibing the spirit of militarism. In militarism, force is employed for the sake of force, aggression or self-aggrandisement, but in Sikhism it was made subject to some major qualifications viz. (i) it must be for a cause legitimate and noble, (ii) it must be a remedy of the last resort.

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Awakening among the Hindus

The martyrdom of the Guru had another effect. It kindled a new spirit among the Hindus, especially of the northern India for whom the Guru apparently, made sacrifice.

They became poignant in their criticism of the religious policy of Aurangzeb and the most potent among them began to think in terms of resisting the tyranny of the Government. The hardened attitude of the Hindus served two-fold purpose. Firstly it saved the Hindu religion and culture from total annihilation and secondly it contributed a lot so far as the downfall of the Mughal Empire was concerned.

Nature of the Guru Tegh Bahadur's Struggle—Did the Guru have any political object ?

Regarding the true nature of Guru Tegh Bahadur's struggle, different opinions have been expressed. But before we draw our own conclusion, it would be advisable to discuss all the questions connected with the struggle. Was it for the protection of religion? If so, which religion—the Hindu or the Sikh religion or for the religion in general ? Could the struggle be viewed as one for the protection of civil rights like freedom of conscience or as one for the freedom of the country from a foreign yoke ? Was there any political motive involved in it ?

No communal considerations seem to have weighed with the Guru in his struggle. The fact that many important Muslims suffered executions at the hands of the Mughal Emperor and many Muslims such as Saif Khan offered support to the Guru in his mission shows that the struggle was not confined to the non-Muslims alone. The ordinary Musalman was also not happy. It is true that he had no religious difficulties like those of non-Muslims but socially, politically and economically, his lot was no better than that of Hindu and Sikh counterpart. Guru Tegh Bahadur seems to be well-congnizant of this fact. Therefore, it would be a rather narrow view if it is argued, as it is often done, that the Guru's struggle was inspired only by the desire to protect Hindu religion. That such a thing was not absent from his mind may be conceded, because his son and immediate successor Guru Gobind Singh had made reference to it in his autobiography. But that it was an independent sole aim with the Guru is open to question. Guru Gobind Singh himself, lest his reference to Tilak and Janju should be taken in a narrow sense, had added at the same place that the sacrifice of his father was for Dharma. Here the significance lies in the absence of any prefix Hindu or Sikh. The truth seems to be that the Guru's lofty object of building up a popular resistance to the tyranny of the Government automatically covered the protection of Hindu religion or even Sikh religion which too, had

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been dealt with severely. Moreover, the Dharma in the context of our culture, covers almost every aspect of life where the principle of justice or righteousness is involved. Anything done for a noble or righteous cause is something done for Dharma. So when we say that the struggle of Guru Tegh Bahadur was for Dharma, it does not mean a struggle for religion, much less a struggle for Hindu or Sikh religion. It was called so because the cause involved in it, the fight against tyranny, was a noble and righteous cause.

It is stated, sometimes, that the attempt of Guru Tegh Bahadur was for the protection of civil rights, particularly the freedom of conscience. "To a modern mind saturated in consciousness of his rights such a statement would be only right and acceptable; but the consciousness of rights is comparatively a recent development in our country. In our civilization till the advent of the British, emphasis used to be more on duties than on rights. And it is this thing which determined our concept of tyranny. Tyranny, then, was no infringement of rights but a departure from duties. The ruler was believed to owe certain duties to his subjects. If he departed from them, the result was tyranny. It was in this sense that the word tyranny was understood by the Gurus or others in those days."[1]

Nor is it correct that the freedom of the struggle of Guru Tegh Bahadur was for the freedom of the country from a foreign yoke. Perhaps, nothing will be farther from truth than this, for neither the concept of Hindu as we understand it today was there, nor was the Government of the Mughals considered a foreign yoke. The people who were born and died here who looked upon this land as their native land and who had been here for several generations, could not, in fairness, be regarded as foreigners.

Did Guru Tegh Bahadur have any political object ? If arousing the people to resist against tyranny is a political object, then the answer may be 'yes'. The Guru emphasised the Dharma character of his approach again and again when he was charged with sedition. His repeated statement[2] that he was a darvesh (recluse) having nothing to do with the overthrow of the Government brings into relief the same dharma aspect. But as it had been made clear earlier that by 'dharma' the Guru meant anything done for a noble or righteous cause, no other cause was as righteous as the resistance to the tyranny of the Mughals. According to Dr. Fauja Singh, the Guru identified

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1. Dr. Fauja Singh : *Execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur : A New Look.*
2. Sohan Lal : *Umdat-ut-Twarikh*, daftar, pp. 48-9.

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himself with the weak and the oppressed and attempted to arouse them to a sense of resistance to the tyranny to which they were subjected.

The approach as well as the struggle of Guru Tegh Bahadur exactly fits in with the spirit and general tendency of the Sikh Movement in the past. The movement had already committed itself to resistance to all forms of tyranny including the political. What is more, the employment of force for a purpose like this had been recognised as legitimate. Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai had maintained troops and encouraged training in the use of weapons. Hence we can say that the aimed struggle of Guru Tegh Bahadur was a continuation and no distortion of the character of the Sikh Movement. The contrary view depicting the Guru going down before executioner's blow before striking one for his own cause would perhaps be entirely out of line with the previous established character of the movement.

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Culmination

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Chapter 13

GURU GOBIND SINGH

(b. A.D. 1666; d. A.D. 1708)

Guru Gobind Singh,[1] the tenth and the last pontiff of the Sikhs born on 22nd December, 1666 A.D.[2] in Patna. He was the only son of his father,Guru Tegh Bahadur and his mother, Gujri. At the time of his birth, Guru Tegh Bahadur was at Dacca engaged in delivering his message to the people. Bhai Dayal Das immediately dispatched a letter to Dacca giving the happy news which was carried poste-haste to Dacca by Bhai Mehar Chand and Bhai Kalyan Chand. There was great rejoicing at Dacca. Recitation of the scriptures and illumination were held; food and clothes were distributed among the poor. Gobind Rai passed his early years at Patna under the care of his maternal uncle, Kirpal, and mother and grandmother, Gujri and Nanaki respectively. With regard to his early childhood, not much is known; but this much is certain that he looked to be a prodigy and he created the impression in the minds of the people that he was destined to be a great man. The bewitchingly handsome face, assertive yet unassuming utterances, amicable and affectionate manners made him the cynosure of all, great and small. Pandit Shiv Dutt, an old erudite Brahmin Scholar, Raja Fateh Chand Maini and his wife Kishori Devi, Nawab Rahim Bux and Karim Bux were among the first row of persons who recognised the greatness of the child. As a child, he used to play the commander whilst his playmates acted as soldiers. His toys

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1. Guru Gobind Singh, in his childhood was fequently addressed as Gobind Rai After, the creation of the Khalsa, he added the suffix 'Singh' to his name

2. Irvine places the birth of Guru Gobind Singh in 1660 and Bute Shah Magh 13, 1718 BK. (1662 A D.), Bhai Randhir Singh fixes 18th December 1669 as the date of the Guru's birth. Irvine perhaps bases his conclusion on the evidence furnished by *Bansavali Nama* by Kesar Singh but we have no faith in the viracity of his evidence. According to Bhai Randhir Singh the Guru was only 2 years old at the time of departure from Patna and 5 years old at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom which is difficult to accept especially when there is Guru Gobind Singh's own statement that at the time of his Father's martyrdom, he was fully trained and was ready to take up responsibilities of Dharm and Karm. Moreover, Trilochan Singh says that the copyist wrote the figure 3 in such a manner that it can either be read 6 or 3. Besides this according to *Sau Sakhi* (translated by S. Attar Singh), the date of the birth of Guru comes out to be 1660 A.D. Almost all the historical records and Gurparnalis give Posh Sudi 7, 1729 B.S. or December 22, 1666 A.D. as the correct date.

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were mostly bows, arrows and other arms. "He used himself to construct such toys of reeds and similar materials. His favourite games were sham fights, military exercise and manoeuvers. He organised regular troops of boys. For their pay, *Kauris* and pice were disbursed and they were feasted with sweetmeats. He also acted as a judge holding regular courts, while his playmates appeared before him as litigants. All that he did, and the manner in which he played his part was astonishing and wonderful.[1]

In February, 1671, Gobind Rai reached Anandpur along with his father and was received by the disciples. Arrangements were made for his education. Sati Das[2] was appointed for imparting education in Persian, Bajjar Singh for riding and military art and Gurbakhsh Singh for teaching Gurmukhi.

Hindu poets and bards who had sought refuge in Anandpur taught him Sanskrit and Brij. He heard them recite the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata and other Hindu texts. These were impressionable years and Gobind developed a sensitive response to literature. After finishing his lessons, Gobind would ride into forests with Kirpal Chand in search of *Shikar*. He learnt to ride, shoot and use different weapons.

When he was nine, a group of 16 Kashmiri Pandits under the leadership of Kirpa Ram Datt of Mattan who were ordered to embrace Islam came to Anandpur to seek Guru's help (25th May, 1675). Guru Tegh Bahadur was pained to hear of the atrocities committed on them. After days of cogitation, Tegh Bahadur told the Pandits that if a man of piety was prepared to defy the governor at the risk of his life, the Hindus could be saved. Gobind Rai asked, "Who could be more pious than the Guru ?" Tegh Bahadur made up his mind and told the Pandits to inform the governor that if he could convert the Guru to his creed, the Hindus of Kashmir would offer no further resistance. All this was conveyed to the Emperor Aurangzeb at Hasan Abdal who passed order for the arrest of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Guru Tegh Bahadur apprehensive of his immediate arrest installed his son Gobind Rai as his successor and conferred on him the traditional marks of Guruship on 8th July, 1675.[3] Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested at Malikpur and taken to Delhi

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1. Khazan Singh: *History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion*, vol I.
2. Kesar Singh Chibbar : *Bansavali Nama.*
3. *Bhat Vahi* Talauda pargana Jind, for corroboration see Sarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian.*

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where he was asked either to accept Islam or to perform a miracle and give evidence of his divine powers. The Guru would not renounce his faith and he was beheaded publicly in Chandni Chowk on November 11, 1675. The Guru's severed head was brought by Jaita to Anandpur. Gobind Rai was deeply moved by Jaita's courage and allegiance. When he heard how the devout Sikh had defied the Mohammedan guards, he embraced Jaita and exclaimed 'Rangreta Guru ka Beta'—Rangretas are the sons of the Guru.

The death of Guru Tegh Bahadur as it symbolised in itself the resistance to the tyranny of Muslim rule in favour of a new society—egalitarian and bound by faith in the oneness of God—had a deep effect on the young Guru. A question arose in his mind "When evil is holding its head high, should a good man knuckle under it or take up arms to combat and destroy it ?" The Guru decided in favour of the latter course i.e. to combat evil and to uphold righteousness "Guru Gobind Singh has at numerous places in his compositions expressed the ideal of a crusader on the path of God—yearning to attain the qualities which go to forge such a character.

Though the task was stupendous, he addressed himself to accomplish it. The process had been started by the earlier Gurus. Guru Nanak did not hesitate from condemning the atrocities perpetuated by Babur on the people of India. Guru Angad too did not acquiesce when Humayun threatened him with the naked sword. Guru Arjan suffered execution but did not submit. Guru Hargobind took up arms to defend himself and his followers from the persecution of the Imperial Mughal Emperors. But it fell to Guru Gobind Singh to enjoin upon his followers to make use of the sword if other means failed to liquidate the wicked and their wickedness. In order to achieve his object, he initiated schemes to enable his followers to attain self-culture and physical fitness. He issued 'Hukamnamas' (Circular letters) to the people to present to him arms of different designs and make. The Guru's orders were obeyed with zeal and devotion. Besides this, he used to get sharp-pointed arrows from Lahore and his own foundries.

He himself wore uniform and bore arms and induced others to practise archery and musket-shooting. Many followers with martial instincts and those whose fore-fathers had fought in the army of his grandfather Guru Hargobind or had served on the bodyguard of Guru Har Rai flocked to him. The Guru's durbar looked like a military camp. According to Archer "the Guru welcomed the recruits and drilled them in martial exercises."

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The Guru encouraged various muscle-developing and strenuous sports as a part of the programme of physical culture. The Guru's much-liked game was that of the splash of water and hunting. He was keenly interested in hunting wild bears and the tigers. The Guru's principal companions at this time were—Sango Shah, Jit Mal, Gopal Chand, Ganga Ram, Mohri Chand, Gulab Rai[1], Sham Dass,[1] Kirpal, Bhai Daya Ram, and Bhai Nand Chand, the upright and favourite Masand.

As regards the mental culture of the Sikhs, the Guru instructed his followers to lead a well-meaning and disciplined life; and later on, in one of his writings, he expressed I am not enamoured of a Singh, what is dear to my heart is his disciplined conduct.[2] The Guru himself led a strictly disciplined life. The Guru according to the custom of his predecessors used to rise in the end of the night and perform his devotion. He particularly delighted to listen to the *Asa di Var*. After day-break, he gave his Sikhs divine instructions and then practised martial exercises. In the afternoon, he received his Sikhs, went shooting or raced horses; and ended the evening by performing the divine service of 'Rehras'.

Side by side all this, the Guru was always serious about the work of self-culture of his followers. To achieve his object, he employed literature. He himself composed 227 *chhands* of *Debi path* in 1683-4 as also 1106 *chhands* of Dasam Katha Bhagwat ki in the same year. The former composition deals with the exploits of *Chandi* in extirpating the tyrants, while the latter composition relates the story of Lord Krishna in *Doapar*, as is stated in *Daswan Sakand*. Moreover, there assembled a galaxy of poets and painters and scholars who rendered into *Biij* varying round Sanskrit on one extreme and colloquial Hindi on the other, the stories of Rama Krishna and the deeds of the *Chandi*. Another composition of the Guru which belongs to this period was *Jap*. In this composition the Guru revealed his mastery over the Sikh philosophical thought as also his keenness not to break its continuity. The composite effect of all this was that the people, in a short span of time, were imbued with martial spirit and faith in one God.

Ranjit Nagara (Drum of the Victory of Battle)

Apart from the steps the Guru took for fostering mental and physical culture, the Guru got prepared a drum under the supervision of Nand Chand, the trusted Dewan of the Guru.

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1. Sons of Suraj Mal, the uncle of Guru Gobind Singh.
2. *Tankhah Nama* by Bhai Nand Lal.

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The purpose of the Guru was to enthuse the army which was swelling day after day. In those days, only an independent Chieftain was to use such a drum and that too, within the limits of his own territory. The beating of the drum within the bounds of another Chief's territory was an hostile act and meant an open invitation of war.

Visit of Duni Chand and Rattan Rai

Duni Chand, one of the several devotees, visited Anandpur in 1681 and presented to the Guru a woollen tent, which was surpassed in excellence. It was embroidered in gold and silver and represented all that was beautiful in nature. "Men looked at the artistic work with feeling of great delight and ecstasy and admired Duni Chand and other disciples from Balakh, Bokhara and Qandar on whose conjoint expense and labour the gift had been prepared." In the same year on the occasion of Diwali Festival, Raja Rattan Rai[1] of Assam came on a visit to the Guru. He brought several gifts for the Guru, among them was an elephant trained to fan its master by swinging a plain leaf with its trunk, and a unique weapon which could be used as a sword, a lance or a club.

The growth of wealth and prestige of the Guru, his raising of the army, his drilling into the minds of the people the spirit of comraderie and absolute faith in the unity of Godhead, his preparation of new type of literature, his frantic attempt to raise the submerged humanity and the lowcaste to the dignity of his own children by baptism of love--all these generated a new force, a new response and fertilized a new consciousness. As a matter of fact, in Guru Gobind Singh, the people found the theme that they aspired for, the lever of progress which they long cherished. And that theme or lever was not to knuckle under evil, social, religious or political, but to endeavour to establish global society bound by its faith in oneness of God and social equality; depreciating caste, superstition and artificial barriers of birth or wealth.

Bhim Chand's Animosity

Since the Guru had started a movement of the masses against their spiritual, social and political barons with strong anti-Moghul fervour, it was but natural that he was not liked by the Rajputs and by the Mughal Govenment. Raja Bhim Chand in whose territory the Guru then resided became particularly apprehensive of the designs of the Guru. Ranjit Nagara,

1. Raja Rattan Rai was the son of Raja Ram Rai who accompanied Guru Tegh Bahadur on his religious tour to various places in Assam.

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the maintenance of the army, injecting into the minds of the Sikhs new ideology, all these were regarded by him as an affront to him and initial attempts to establish state within the state. Nevertheless, Raja Bhim Chand decided to visit the Guru to see things for himself. The Guru received the Raja in the famous woollen tent which had been presented to him by a disciple from Kabul Other gifts presented to the Guru were also displayed. Bhim Chand was surprised by the young Guru's aonfidence and devotion of his Sikhs. When he returned to Bilaspur, he decided to make clear to the Sikhs the status which he wished to attribute to Anandpur. "He wished to treat it a territory under his jurisdiction and levy tribute on it".[1] He sent a message to Gobind Rai asking him to present to him the woollen tent and Prasadi—the elephant presented by Raja Rattan Rai. The Guru was clear in his mind that once they showed any sign of weakness, he would not be satisfied until they paid him regular tribute. Accordingly, Bhim Chand demands were not met. It is said, the Raja sent his emissaries thrice, the last one being Raja Kesri Chand, the Raja of Jaswal to get his order complied with, but the Guru did not yield.

Nervousness of the Masands

At this juncture a large majority of the Masands, who felt agitated went to the Guru's mother requesting her to dissuade the Guru from his war-like propensities lest it should bring some trouble to him. Mata Gujri did her best to prevail upon the Guru to part with the articles and send them to the Raja to please him. But Nand Chand, an honest Masand, disagreed with the rest. He proclaimed, "Mother, hath a lion ever feared jackals ? Hath any one ever seen the sight of water in campari-son with ocean ? The Guru is a tiger-brave and splendid as the sun. Shall he fear Bhim Chand ? When the foolish hillmen who are like mosquitoes contend with the Guru, they shall become acquainted with our strength and suffer the mortifica-tion." Guru Gobind Singh agreed with Nand Chand as his views tallied with those of his own and it was decided to refuse to yield.

Reasons for leaving Anandpur for Paonta

Soon after this incident, Raja Medini Parkash of Nahan invited the Guru to visit him. The Guru accepted the offer and left for Nahan. Guru himself says "After this I left Anandpur and reached the city of Paonta (a place in Nahan state) situated on the bank of Jamuna and saw and partook various activities.[2]

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1. Sunitvir Singh : *Homage to Guru Gobind Singh.*
2. *Bachitar Natak* by Guru Gobind Singh.

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The Guru does not give any details regarding the reasons that led him to decide to leave Makhowal. It is, therefore, necessary to search for the causes. The Sikh *Sakhi Kars* are of the view that because he incurred displeasure of Bhim Chand on account of his refusal to loan the trained Prasadi elephant to Raja Bhim Chand, on the occasion of his son's betrothal to the daughter of Fateh Shah of Garhwal, he had to leave Anandpur. The view of the Sikh chroniclers does not sound convincing. First, if we accept this view, we will have to believe that the Guru's stay at Paonta was nominal which is incorrect in view of the relics of Paonta and Nahan tradition. The betrothal of Ajmer Chand, the son of the Raja of Bilaspur seems to have taken place in 1682, after the visit of Duni Chand of Kabul and Rattan Rai, a Chieftain of Assam and the battle of Bhangani was fought in 1688 suggesting that the marriage was performed in 1687 i.e. to say five years after the betrothal—the fact which is not believable in the light of the Sikh chronicler's records suggesting it again and again that marriage was performed not long after betrothal ceremony. Hence the linking of 'Elephant episode' with the retirement of the Guru to Nahan is not historically correct.

Nevertheless, the relations of the Guru with Bhim Chand were not happy the reason of which can be found in the inter-State politics of hill states. When Guru Tegh Bahadur was invited by Raja Dip Chand to settle at Makhowal, which was within his territory, he was motivated to detach the Sikh Guru and the Sikhs from their close friendship with the chief of Hadur. Dip Chand died in 1667 and Bhim Chand who was a minor succeeded to him. Some years even after the death of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the existence of Guru's headquarters, one at Makhowal and the other at Kiratpur, did not create any problem.

The rulers of Hadur and Kahlur remained indulgent towards the Sikhs, particularly after the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Delhi in 1675. Within a few years, however, two new factors came into operation, Kirpal, the maternal uncle of Guru Gobind Singh adopted the martial interests of Guru Gobind and Makhowal began to give the appearance of an armed camp. The Guru's movements between Makhowal and Kiratpur, which hitherto had appeared to be an ordinary thing, were looked upon with suspicion by Bhim Chand who was now coming to manhood. Besides this mutual rivalry between the ruler of Hadur and Bhim Chand began to re-appear which for some time past were relegated to background under the strain of the danger of the Mughal Imperialism. Apprehensive of the close ties between the chief of Hadur and the armed Sikhs of the young Guru Gobind, Bhim Chand demanded an un-equivocal

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declaration from Guru Gobind Singh that he recognised the temporal lordship of the Chief of Kahlur and of him alone. Bhim Chand, in the pride of youth, threw all caution to the winds and treated the young Gobind and his maternal uncle Kirpal Chand in a cavalier fashion. He insisted on the Guru recognizing his authority in a manner that was both shabby and insulting. He not only demanded tribute as an over-lord which none of the Sikh Gurus had paid till then but insisted on being presented with the things of his choice which the Guru rightly refused to give. Considering the refusal as a challenge to his authority, Bhim Chand now attacked the Guru but was beaten back. The unexpected conflict as it was not followed by any understanding between the victorious and the defeated began a period of extreme tension for Kirpal. In this stage of suspended hostilities constant clashes between the Guru's men and Bhim Chand's soldiers were inevitable. Such state of affairs went a long way in taking the decision of shifting the headquarter to Paonta. Another consideration also played its part so far as the decision of shifting the headquarter was concerned.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom took place in 1675 and it was too much to expect from the bigot Aurangzeb to leave Guru Gobind Singh untouched especially when Ram Rai and his henchmen who had easy access to the court and the person of Aurangzeb were hostile towards him. In view of this, the Guru decided to select some place other than Anandpur for his abode where he should find ample peace and opportunity to give a shape to his plans. He selected Paonta for this purpose which commanded advantages over Anandpur. In the first instance, Paonta was farther from Sirhind, the nearest Mughal centre of power as compared with Anandpur. Secondly, it provided a natural fortress and because of its difficult environs, it was well-nigh inaccessible. No wonder, the Guru built a fortress thereat. The fortress was built by the followers of the Guru in twelve days in 1685. A township grew round it. He lived at Paonta for three years, during this period his activities touched all aspects of life. He continued the task of the work of self-improvement through means more than one.

Educational Activities

He went through the whole gamut of epic-literature in Sanskrit, and equipped his mind with soul-stirring legends of the Mahabharata and the Puranas and was deeply impressed by the idea which runs throughout the Puranic literature, the idea of a saviour appearing from time to time to uphold righteousness and destroy unrighteousness to uproot evil and establish good. The stories of Ram destroying the Demon-King of Lanka,

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the son of Devki crushing Kansa, and especially the exploits of that personification of righteousness and divine power called Durga, breaking skulls and drinking the blood of Mahkasur and other demons, filled his heart with hope and confidence. Besides this, as he grew in age, he began to understand correctly what his inheritance was and what it alluded to. Guru Nanak in one of his hymns had named God as demon-killer. Similar views were expressed by Guru Ram Das. Guru Gobind Singh in consonance with the views of Guru Nanak and other Gurus regarded God as demon-killer, with the difference that he unlike prophets sent by God, did not arrogate to himself any divinity. Therefore while strongly believing in his heaven-ordained mission, he humbly declared that he was but a servant of the Supreme Being and anybody calling him God will be thrown into the cauldron of hell.

As a part of his programme of educating the masses to enable them to fraternise themselves with the Sikh Movement; he gathered around him a comity of literary luminaries from all parts of India. The records[1] speak 105 poets and 20 writers but we feel that they formed only the nucleus and in fact, there were a larger number of poets and writers. According to Sikh tradition, a vigorous drive was made to re-write, restate, translate the old Puranic literature, and also to create such literature which prepared the people to realise the ideals of the movement. Though the detailed account of the literary compositions of the various poets is not known, yet some works are available indicating the spirit which these works wanted to generate. Sainapat rendered Chanakya Neeti from Sanskrit to Brij Bhasha. Bhoj and Lakhan translated 'Praja Tantar', Nand Lal composed Bandgi Nama, Amrit and Lahari gave a live interpretation to Sabha Parv of Mahabharata. The common note of these compositions was that heroic struggle should be waged against the evil forces. Guru Gobind Singh himself wrote a lot. During his stay at Paonta he composed 227 Chhands of Deb Path.[2] Gopi Berahe Natak consisting of 136 Chhands, Ras Mandal comprising 310 Chhands, Judh Parbodh, Shaster Nam Mal .

The literature as produced by Guru Gobind Singh was not for its own sake, it was used as one of the levers for the regeneration of the people. "The key-note of this vast literature some of which is preserved in the Dasam Granth is optimism, freedom from superstition and strong faith in the oneness of God and

1. Refer to Guru Gobind Singh Ji De Darbari Ratan by Piara Singh Padam, pp. 4-6.
2. Deb Path (1683-84); Gopi Berahe 136 Chhands (1680)
Ras Mandal A.D. 1688
Judh Parbodh A.D. 1688
Shastar Nam Mala A.D. 1685.

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of all humanity. His purpose in creating literature was to infuse a new spirit among his followers and steel their hearts against all injustice and tyranny.' The tyranny that then prevailed in the country was not only political but religious and social as well. If some of the rulers subjected the people to certain disabilities and hardships, the Brahmins and Mullas where they were concerned, were no less cruel in keeping millions of their countrymen in a sort of religious bondage. If the political rulers were treating the subject people like so many vermins, their religious leaders were doing no less in looking down upon so many of their fellowmen as untouchable. The political tyranny was discriminate and occasional but the religious tyranny was indiscriminate and continuous being practised every day in kitchens, at village wells, in temples and hundreds of other places of mutual resort.

It was more heinous than any other crime.

Guru Gobind Singh says :

"The sins committed in the name of religion are such as to put even greatest sins to brood."

Missionary Activities

Notwithstanding his pre-occupations, the Guru addressed himself to the task of spreading his mission. He got a gurdwara built on the banks of the Jamuna in November, 1685. The shrine was named 'Paonta Sahib', meaning a foot-stool to stay. Religious gatherings used to be held as usual both in the morning and evening wherein Divine Music and religious discourses were held. In this way, the Guru tried to convey his message to the local populace. Apart from this, the Guru visited Kopal Mochan, Kalsia, Siana, and Thanesar. He visited the village named Dhakauli while he was returning to Anandpur from Paonta. He also visited the village Lahar. All these places have gurdwaras commemorating Guru's visit and his impact on them. Many persons personally visited Paonta to listen to the Guru. A renowned Muslim Saint, namely Budhu Shah came to Paonta and after a long conversation with him came round to the Guru's views. Budhu Shah remained for some time with the Guru who entertained great affection for him. After some time, the Guru at the recommendation of this very Faqir recruited 500 Pathans, discharged from the Moghul Army for a petty offence and by doing so, showed to the world that the Guru was not anti-Islam. He was the protagonist of progressive forces leavening the process of regeneration.

The Guru, in order to give Sikh orientation to the Indian faiths, thought it prudent to create a separate class of persons

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possessed of a fairly wide knowledge of Sanskrit and devoted to the Guru's Gospel. To achieve this object, the Guru sent five chosen Sikhs to Pandit Raghu Nath for learning Sanskrit; but that monster of orthodoxy refused because none of the students was Brahmin. At this, the Guru sent those very Sikhs to Benaras but this time dressed in saffron-coloured apparel. A gurdwara named 'Chetan Math Guru ki Sangat' has been built at that place. Those five Sikhs—Ram Singh, Sobha Singh, Karam Singh, Ganda Singh and Vir Singh—were intiated into the order of the Khalsa through the baptism of the sword. They founded an organisation, known as Nirmala which in course of time, rendered meritorious services, to the cause of learning and scholastic pursuits among the Sikhs.

Ram Rai's Reclamation

Ram Rai, Guru Har Rai's eldest son was born in 1646. At the age of fifteen he was sent to Aurangzeb to explain the position of the Guru (Har Rai) and his teachings. The Guru on the departure of his son Ram Rai for Delhi, enjoined him, to fix his thought on God, and everything would prove successful. He also impressed upon him the propriety of not countenancing any objection the Emperor might make to Granth Sahib but of replying to him patiently and to the purpose.[1] But Ram Rai began to curry favour with the Emperor by acting in the manner that was hardly in consonance with the teachings of Sikhism. Ram Rai displayed miraculous powers. But the climax of his delinquency was reached when he did not hesitate even to distort a word in a verse of Guru Nanak to please the Emperor. Doubtless, these things pleased Aurangzeb but Guru Har Rai got angry and superseding Ram Rai, nominated Har Krishan as his successor. Ram Rai did not accept his father's decision without a struggle. He, with the help and instigation of a few corrupt and recalcitrant Masands, Tara and Goinda in particular, declared himself as the Guru. He invoked Aurangzeb's assistance. Aurangzeb readily agreed and he was given an opportunity of intervening in a matter, which by all means, should have been kept away from him and the whole incident showed up the Sikhs in a light which was hardly dignified.[2] The Emperor summoned the child (Guru Har Krishan) to his presence and since he was convinced of his divinity, he recognised him as the legitimate Guru.

Ram Rai again tried for Guruship after the death of Guru Har Krishan, but he was foiled in his designs and Guru Tegh

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1. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, p. 30, vol. iii and iv.
2. Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. II.

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Bahadur was generally acknowledged as the leader of the Sikhs. But Ram Rai persisted in his claim that he was the real Guru. His headquarter was Dehra Doon. 'Doon' means mountainous and Dera means abode. This headquarter was given to him as jagir by Aurangzeb. In fact the modren city of Dehra Dun has received its name from Ram Rai's Dehra.[1]

With the lapse of time, Ram Rai's views changed; but he, being a willing tool in the hands of the Mughal Emperor, and having harmed the cause of the Sikhs, was afraid of Guru Gobind Singh and could not muster courage to face Guru Gobind Singh.

The Guru, sensing all this, sent Nand Chand and Daya Rai to re-assure him. According to Macauliffe, Ram Rai, on receiving the Guru's message was delighted, invested the envoy with robes of honour and decided to remain on friendly terms with the martial son of the Guru. The Guru's polite and sweet message brought about a change in Ram Rai's mind. He regretted his past sins and yearned for a meeting with the Guru.

The meeting took place on Sunday in a ferry in the middle of the stream. Ram Rai touched the Guru's feet in obeisance and said 'I am fortunate to have obtained a sight of thee when I am gone, protect my family...my father Guru Har Rai used to say that someone would be born from our family who would restore and refit the vessel for the safe conveyance of souls.[2]

Henceforward, Ram Rai ceased to be a separate entity, and for the rest of his life lived as an admirer and follower of Guru Gobind Singh. He did not leave any injunction in any form that he should be regarded as a Guru of a separate sect. He had full faith in the institutions of the Sikhs and led life as a devotee of Guru Gobind Singh. In 1661 when Ram Rai who was in trance was cremated by Masands, in defiance of the entreaties and prayers of Punjab Kaur, Ram Rai's wife, Guru Gobind Singh at once responded to the request of the Punjab Kaur and meted out condign punishment to the guilty masands. This also proves that had there been differences between the Guru and Ram Rai, the Guru would have not attended to the request of Punjab Kaur.

The significance of Ram Rai's reclamation by the Guru is really great. The leader having been won over, the schismatic

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1. Bhai Kahan Singh : Mahan Kosh.
2. Macauliffe : The Sikh Religion, vol. v, p. 21,

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move of Ram Rayyias lost its vitality and direction with the result that Sikhism gained much. Many of Ram Rai's followers turned devotees of Guru Gobind Singh. Punjab Kaur, the wife of Ram Rai, threw heart and soul into the Sikh movement. No doubt, a few Ram Rayya masands carried on their activities but since they were bereft of any higher motives and their activities sprang from their lust and propensity for wealth, their influence among the Sikhs diminished considerably.

NEW TYPE OF MILITARISM

Militarism implies martial valour, martial aptitude and commitment to military ideals. Guru Gobind Singh possessed all these qualities. He was at once a brave soldier, a seasoned general, a matchless military organiser, but his militarism was of a higher order. The common motifs underlying militarism are : (1) Political domination; (2) Urge for patriotic strife; (3) Acquisition of wealth. But the Guru entertained none of these. Nor did the Guru's militarism resembled that of the Spartans, who were militarised to do anything—good or bad, for the state. The Guru's militarism had two things implicit in it, viz. Shakti and Divine Power. The Guru adopted two symbols for the propagation of his militarism; the Goddess Chandi and the sword. 'Chandi' being symbol of divine power and sword that of power and dignity. Kirpan was, therefore, an active symbol, an instrument of offence and defence and not a charm to be tied among the turban ends or stowed away in the back of the comb. It is to be kept in a sheath and worn in a belt, it can cut through armour, through men, horses, even elephants. It is superior to all instruments,[1] yet it was to be used for the holy cause.

Such a militarism was atonce the need of the times and a potent instrument for the development of the country. It has been seen throughout the ages of History that no amount of education or religious refinement is enough, unless the refined and emancipated man, one who combines in himself wisdom and power in equal degrees has control of the commercial and industrial machine which is the state today and control of the organised power which was the state always.

Military Apparatus

Militarism is one thing, military machine is quite another, although both have intimate relations because one lurks behind the other. This being so, it will be interesting as well as enlightening to know about the military machine of the Guru.

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1. Guru Gobind Singh : *Shastar Nam Mala* (11.28).

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A beginning had been made to construct the military apparatus at Anandpur, but it was evolved in all its details at Paonta. It is convenient to study it under the following heads:—

1. Recruitment.
2. Composition of the army.
3. Forts.
4. Tactics.
5. Discipline.
6. Espionage.
7. Weapons.

Recruitment

An analysis of the Guru's army would show that the bulk of the soldiers belonged to Malwa and Majha regions of the Punjab. They were religious votaries as well. They took their food from community kitchen; uniform, arms and horses were provided out of the Guru's Golak (Treasury). Supply of ration to the community kitchen sometimes created difficulties, because the hostile people of the neighbouring hilly areas would not give things even on payment. The soldiers belonged to all castes. Even a few Muslims had got enlisted themselves in the army.

The Guru had no fondness for mercenaries, but at times, when he felt acute shortage of men or faced shortage of instructors for imparting military training, he did not hesitate to recruit them. He enlisted 500 Pathans at Paonta at the instance of Pir Budhu Shah but his experience was far from pleasant. Regarding the pay-scale, not much is known. However, the Guru paid Rs. 5/- to the officer and Re. 1/- to the soldier per day in case of the aforesaid pathan soldiers. It is likely that some rough sort of registration of their names was kept with the Guru. According to the author of Suraj Parkash 'when the people gathered round the Guru, he asked them to join his army. Those who were willing to join got their names registered and their descriptive rolls prepared.' Sainapat also supports the aforesaid view.

Composition of The Army

The Guru's army consisted of horse-men, infantry and artillery. The total strength of the army is difficult to gauge. It differed from time to time and place to place. The maximum strength of the Guru's army at any time has been estimated to be 20000 and at Paonta, it did not exceed five thousand. The artillery men's number was very slender; only a few persons capable of operating guns have been mentioned; although matchlockmen's number was quite considerable. The horses were

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procured on payment and through offerings of the disciples. Riding was developed as a part of the habit of the Sikhs. The Guru's own blue horse has become a tradition on account of its agility, boldness, steadfastness and intelligence and the Guru is remembered as the Lord of the Blue horse.

Forts

Forts occupied an important place in the strategy of the Guru. He caused the fort of Paonta built and raised walls around the town, named Paonta. He regarded forts as the cloistered bulwark against any aggression. He during his later career got built four forts at Anandpur. The forts built by him invariably occupied certain vantage points—mostly on the hill-top or on such points which obstructed the advancement to the focal point. The Paonta Fort like others housed foundry, warehouse to store provisions and the arrangement for the horses and other animals. The ramparts were made massive, strong and broad. The parapets of the fort had got abrasions for cannons to fire. Fort used to provide to the Guru's army a place for withdrawal and offence. In times of seige, the soldiers used to emerge out abruptly and sally forth therefrom.

Tactics

The battle array of the Guru consisted of centre, right flank, left flank, reserve and a vanguard. The Guru, while advancing, always took into consideration the terrain, the enemy's strength and the quality of fighting equipment. Ambuscade was a popular tactic used to be employed by the Guru. Enterprise and quickness in attack accompanied by the tanacity and enthusiasm of a crusader were the valuable assets of the Guru's army. Elephants were also valued much as vehicle for the advance of the army. The Prasadi elephant was donated by Raja Rattan Rai of Assam and another elephant was sent by the Sangat of Dacca. They were used during advance as the first line of assault and also to smash the gates of the forts.

Discipline

Discipline has always been the corner stone of the army. The Guru often uttered "Discipline is dearer to me than a Sikh." The Guru would feel pleased if the disciples performed duties regularly and punctually, kept their weapons in order and exhibited good conduct. Even in the midst of trying circumstances, the soldiers were enjoined upon to keep decorum and were forbidden to cast lustful glances on women.

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Espionage

The Guru did have spies to collect information regarding enemy's forces and other relevant matters. He did not impart any scientific training to the spies, yet they rendered valuable services to the Guru. On the eve of the battle of Bhangani, it was their information which led the Guru to select the maund a few miles away from Paonta wherefrom the battle could be controlled more effectively.

Weapons

The Guru gave concentrated attention to the weapons of the army. In addition to the weapons he procured from his disciples, he got them manufactured from the foundries, established at Paonta at his instance. The weapons used by the Guru were of four kinds : (1) Mukat (2) Amukat (3) Mukta Mukat (4) Yantar-mukt. Mukat weapons were those weapons which parted company of the users. Amukat were those weapons which remained with the users such as sword or Katar. 'Mukta Mukat' weapons could be used while keeping them in the hands and throwing them on the enemy. The weapons such as spears and Javelin fall in this category. Weapons of the fourth kind were used with the help of a mechanical device.

Secular & Diplomatic Activities

Raja Medini Parkash of Nahan and Fateh Shah of Srinagar (U.P.) were at dagger's drawn with each other because of their mutually conflicting claims to a piece of territory. Fateh Shah was engineering designs to launch an aggression on some more area of Medini Parkash who felt upset and sought Guru's help. The fight was imminent but was averted because of the timely intercession of the Guru. The Sikh records speak that Raja Fateh Shah was advised by his ministers to remain on good terms with the Guru since the Guru's animosity towards him would not be in his interest because of the Guru's proximity to his territory. Raja then visited Paonta. The Guru and his maternal uncle, Kirpal Chand advised him to compromise with Raja Medini Parkash. Fateh Shah agreed and Medini Parkash and Fateh Shah became friends to the happiness of peace-loving people.

The Guru devoted a lot of time to sports. He himself says:—

"I enjoyed myself on the bank of the Jamuna
And saw amusements of different kinds
There I killed many tigers
and shot many nilgars and bears".

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Hunting was the Guru's fondness. He was a fearless hunter. One day he, in the company of the Raja of Nahan, reached the den of a white lion who was causing havoc among the hill people. The lion's roars dumbfounded the Raja, but the Guru, with sharp-edged long sword in his hand, slashed the lion into pieces.

A Critical Appraisal of the Achievements of Guru Gobind Singh at Paonta

The Guru's stay at Paonta marks a watershed in his career because it was pregnant with the consequences of significance. Here he enjoyed a comparative calm and thus found the opportunity to ponder over the sad plight of the man of God in India and made up his mind to wipe out the tears off his cheeks as far as it was possible. He employed all the means—literature, mythology, the tales of heroes and heroines--to give new orientation to the outlook of the people and to make them fit to participate in the crusade which he wanted them to start and champion. It was here that his ideas matured and his plans ripened; his concept about the tyrants shed off its communal tinge and colour; but all was not well at Paonta. It was cut off from the rest of the Punjab and this being so, the Guru could not keep himself in complete touch with the Sikhs with the result that the work of the spreading of Guru's Gospel suffered and the masands who were in charge of different dioceses, became awfully indifferent to their duties. Besides this, the inflow of money to the Guru's treasury could not match with the swelling expenditure of the Guru. Masand-system failed to contribute to the multi-dimensional response which was fashioning, firstly because the masands kept the offerings with themselves instead of sending them to the Guru, and secondly because of Guru's project of raising army, the expenditure was too heavy. Moreover, the masands were living a luxurious and a patterned life and were not dynamic enough to understand the scope, nature and direction of the Sikh movement and hence there was urgency to find out alternative means to do the job. They, because of their loose morals, too much worldliness, avarice, intransigent attitude, had lost their usefulness vis-a-vis the Sikh Movement.

BATTLE OF BHANGANI A.D. 1688

Circumstances

In September 1688, the Guru fought the battle of Bhangani against Fateh Shah and his allies. As to the cirumstances which led to the battle, different versions are in vogue. The

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Version of Sikh Records

Sikh records state that Bhim Chand asked the Guru for the loan of Parsadi Elephant which he wanted to lend splendour to the betrothal ceremony of his son. The Guru refused to part with the animal, for he doubted the Raja's intentions. This embittered Bhim Chand's mind who avowed revenge from the Guru. Bhim Chand consulted some of his brother chieftains, Raja Kirpal of Katoch among others, as to the course he should pursue. It was decided that the question should be finally taken up as soon as the impending marriage of Bhim Chand's son with the daughter of Fateh Shah was over and Fateh Shah himself had been consulted about it. In the meantime, the Guru had retired to Paonta and become a great friend of Fateh Shah by amicably settling the disputes between him and the Raja of Nahan.

As the day of the marriage approached, the groom's marriage party started for Srinagar, the capital of Garhwal state. The shortest route to Srinagar passed through Paonta; but the Guru refused to give them the passage in view of the fact he had no faith in Bhim Chand with whom a large number of soldiers accompanied. However, after a lot of higgling, the Guru permitted only the bridegroom and a small number of officers to cross the ferry near Paonta. The rest of the party had to follow a circuitous route to reach Srinagar.

This happening enraged Bhim Chand still more and he began to look forward to the opportunity to give vent to his anger. The long-sought opportunity came when the Guru sent rich presents through his Dewan Nand Chand to be given at the ceremony of Tambol. But the difficulties were immediately raised by Bhim Chand about the acceptance of the Guru's presents and he openly threatened if the presents of the Guru were accepted, he would sever all connection with Fateh Shah and return without marrying his son. The outcome was that Nand Chand had to bring all the presents back. On his way back, Nand Chand was attacked by Bhim Chand but he was able to forge return safe and sound. After the marriage was over Bhim Chand held a conference with Fateh Shah and some other Hill Rajas present there, such as Kirpal of Katoch, Gopal of Guler, Hari Chand of Hadur, and the Raja of Jaswal. They all decided to attack the Guru on their way back.

Three points

From the above account, three points clearly emerge : Firstly that the sole or the main cause was the estrangement between Bhim Chand and the Guru. Secondly it was caused because of the Guru's refusal to loan out elephant to Raja and then to dis-allow passage to the marriage party through Paonta. Thirdly, Fateh Shah was forced by Bhim Chand to sever all relationship with the Guru and then attack him.

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Let us examine all these points carefully before we reach any conclusion. Let us examine first two points in the first instance. If we accept the authenticity of these points, the Guru's stay in Nahan territory must have been nominal, for he left Makhowal when the marriage of Bhim Chand's son with the daughter of Fateh Shah was impending and he came back immediately afte the marriage ceremony was over. The view is upheld by the Sikh records unanimously. The Sikh Chroniclers view that Bhim Chand asked for a temporary loan of the animal on the occasion of his son's marriage also points to the conclusion that even when Bhim Chand was making preparations to proceed to Srinagar to celebrate his son's wedding, the Guru was still at Makhowal. From the Guru's own account we learn that the Guru left Paonta immediately after the battle of Bhangani. This being so, the Guru's stay at Nahan turns out to be a very short stay; but the activities of the Guru at Paonta—the construction of the fort, the preparation of the literature etc.—were so varied that they could not be compressed within that short period. This being so, we have very good reasons to believe that he made somewhat protracted stay at Paonta. From this it follows that the Guru must have not gone to Paonta immediately before the marriage of Bhim Chand's son. And if this is so, the entire story that the bitterness between the Guru and Bhim Chand grew as a result of the Guru's refusal to lend the elephant on the marriage of his son falls to the ground. But it does not mean that Bhim Chand was well-disposed to the Guru. In fact when Bhim Chand grew to the youthhood and took upon himself the responsibility of running the state, he took note of the activities of the Guru at Makhowal and became keen in asserting his authority on the establishment of the Guru and in the pride of his youth threw all cautions to the winds. To this purpose, he had made a unsuccessful attack on the Guru. It is possible that Bhim Chand might have played his nefarious role—inasmuch as the instigation of Fateh Shah was concerned. But to attribute the outbreak of hostility between the Guru and Fateh Shah solely to the enmity of Bhim Chand and to consider it the major cause of the war is too much for the historical analysis to justify.

No mention of Bhim Chand in Bachittar Natak

Another thing which fortifies our assumption is that in *Bachittar Natak* practically the only reliable evidence regarding the battle of Bhangani, there is no mention of Bhim Chand in connection with the battle. This fact in itself is significant particularly when the Sikh writers assert that Bhim Chand's enmity was the main cause for the clash. Moreover, had Bhim Chand been the sole or main cause for the battle, it was improbable that the Guru would so readily return to Kahlur immediately after the battle was over.

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Closely connected with this is the question: if Bhim Chand's enmity towards the Guru was not the cause or the major cause, what else then, was responsible for the battle. Cunningham says that the Guru seems to have endeavoured to mix himself up with the affairs of the half independent chiefs and to obtain a commanding influence over them, so as by degrees to establish a virtual independent principality, amid mountain fastnesses to serve as the basis of his operation against the Mughal Government. Cunningham's statement is only partially correct. It is eoubtful whether the views of the Guru had advanced to the dxtent of establishing an independent principality but there are definite indications in the Sikh records that the Guru mixed himself up in the affairs of the Hill Chieftain and we feel that was exactly this in which the genesis of the battle of Bhangani can be found.

Cunningham's view only partially correct

The real cause lay in politics of Hill states

The invitation of Medini Parkash to the Guru to settle down in Sirmour (later known as Nahan) was an act born not only of his admiration of the Guru's personality or adoration of his mission; but it was, also, a measure which was a proof of political sagacity and foresight. Medini Parkash did so, because he was convinced that the Guru and his armed followers would prove beneficial for his state.

In close proximity to the Sirmour State on the western side of Jumuna was the state of Garhwal. These two neighbouring states had borne enmity to each other for about four generations if not more.

The Rajas of Garhwal had some tangible reasons to hate the Sirmour house for its being an instrument in the hands of the Mughals who had been keen on depriving the rulers of Garhwal of their independent status Moreover, the Sirmour Rajas who were then basking in the sunshine of the Mughal favour, had seldom missed the opportunity of territorial gain at the expense of Garhwal.[1]

The Kangra and Simla Hills had been brought under the sovereignty of the Mughals by the time of Jahangir. During the times of Shah Jahan, attempts were made to bring Garhwal under the influence of the Mughal Rule. In 1635, Najabat Khan, the Faujdar of the country at the foot of the Kangra Hills was entrusted with the task of maintaining Mughal hegemony over Garhwal. Mandhata, the Grandfather of Medini

1. Bal S.S. and Grewal J.S. : Guru Gobind Singh, p. 66.

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Parkash helped him. The campaign failed, inspite of a few initial successes. Najabat's failure cost him his Faujdari and jagir although Sirmour ruler was allowed to retain the territory conquered in the initial stages. In 1654, Shah Jahan sent another expedition. Mandhata was again prevailed upon to render help. However, Mandhata expired before the campaign was actually launched, and his son and successor redeemed the promise made by his father. The campaign, being grand success, the ruler of Nahan was given the title of Subhak Parkash. He was given the territory of Kotaha which he occupied after expelling the zamindar of the area.

To Aurangzeb Raja Subhak Parkash renderd important services. He intercepted the correspondence between Dara who was in the Punjab making frantic efforts to gain the Mughal throne and Sulaiman who was, at the moment, a guest of Prithvi Shah, the Garhwal ruler.

With the twin purpose of bringing the ruler of Garhwal within the ambit of the Mughal influence and persuading him to hand over Sulaiman to the Mughals, Aurangzeb commissioned Ra'ad Khan to undertake the expedition. Subhak Parkash once again rendered much-needed help. As a result of this expedition, Subhak Parkash got the area, named Khala Khan identified in the Sirmour State Gazetteer with the modern Ilaqa of Kalagarh which lies near Dehra Dun.

Subhak Parkash expired in 1664 and Budh Parkash succeeded him. During his reign the Mughal Government stopped meting out preferential treatment to Budh Parkash. This was because Medini Shah (He was different from Medini Parkash of Nahan) the heir-apparent to the Garhwal Gaddi had handed over Sulaiman Shah[1] to Aurangzeb in December 1660, and soon after when he became the Raja, he had recognised the Mughal Emperor as his suzerain.

In appreciation of this submission, Aurangzeb had handed back the Dun to the new Garhwal State.[2]

Now the situation as it stood during Aurangzeb's reign was that with Nahan possessing Kalagarh, and Garhwal owning the Dun, the boundaries of the two rival states got mixed up in such a way that Aurangzeb was able to exploit the situation to his own advantage under such situation. Though there was an

1. Sarkar J.N., Aurangzeb vol. iii, pp. 563-65.

2. Dehra Doon Gazetteer, 171.

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explosive arrangement, yet no open conflict occurred. In 1684, Budh Parkash and Medini Shah died and they were succeeded by Medini Parkash in Sirmour and Fateh Shah in Garhwal. 'Both the new Chiefs were ambitious men of ability and for that very reason, they were afraid of each other. While watching each other's moves on the frontier, they had to be on guard against surprise attacks.' It was in this background that Medini Parkash invited the Guru to Sirmour state and allowed him to build a fort at Paonta, a place guarding the only convenient route[1] from one state to the other.

The Guru whose relations with Bhim Chand of Kahlur were strained welcomed the invitation and shifted his headquarter to Paonta.

There was every likelihood of the Guru being involved in the boundary dispute if it arose between these two rival states. But he tackled the problem with a finesse worthy of a great statesman. He improved relations between Sirmour and Garhwal. His success in accomplishing this task was indeed a miracle. It is said that the Guru also made use of Ram Rai in getting the things straightened.

Plan to attack Paonta

With the passage of time, the relations between Sirmour and Garhwal got strained once again. Fateh Shah decided to break the agreement and bring all the disputed territory between the two states under him by force. As a first step in breaking Nahan resistance, the Garhwal ruler marched towards Paonta, which was so close to the border and as strategically placed that Fateh Shah felt it imperative to break the headquarter at Paonta. In this project, Fateh Shah was helped by the Chiefs[2] of Dadhwar and Jaswal Gaji Chand of Chandel, Gopal and Hari Chand. The later Sikh chroniclers add the names of some other chiefs who joined Fateh Shah or at least participated in the deliberations that preceded the battle.

Fateh Shah was forestalled

The Guru, however, forestalled Fateh Shah and checked the invading army at the point where it crossed the river Giri into the Nahan and defeated it in the battle of Bhangani.

Battle at Bhangani

The opposing forces met on the field of Bhangani, about 6 miles distant from Paonta on the plains between the Jamuna and the Giri not far from the city of Rajpura on the Mussoorie road. Just on the eve of the battle, the Pathan mercenaries under their leaders, Hayat Khan, Najabat Khan, Bhikhan

Pathan's treachery

1. Bal S.S., Grewal J.S. : Guru Gobind Singh, p.70.
2. Refer to Bachittar Natak.

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Khan, who had been in the Guru's pay had mutinied and joined the Hill Chiefs. Only Kale Khan with his one hundred men remained true to the Guru. The armed *Mahants* with the exception of their leader Kirpal also left him.

Even then, the Guru was unnerved. He correctly anticipated the route that the Garhwal troops would follow and occupied a hillock to check Fateh Shah's march on Paonta, and established himself on an elevation which was of an immense advantage to him. The bulk of the reserve, with the hillock in between, was not visible to the rival commanders, thereby enabling the Guru's troops to undertake manoeuvres without the knowledge of the enemy. The Guru, himself standing on an elevated ground, could clearly see the whole of the force on the other side. From the contemporary or semi-contemporary records which throw light on the battle it is difficult to comprehend clearly the way the two armies were deployed. However the impression that emerges is that both the armies were divided into units with separate leaders making their moves under their respective supreme commanders, Fateh Shah and Guru Gobind Singh. No elaborate war strategy was followed; 'units moved simply or in groups as directed till the leader was killed or the force felt exhausted. Then the combatants would run to the supreme commanders who would commission fresh men to take up the task.'

War Strategy

The battle commenced with great determination on both sides. Immediately after, the five sons of Bibi Viro, Sangho Shah, Jit mal, Gopal Chand, Ganga Ram, and Mohri Chand organised an attack. They were ably backed by Brahman Daya Ram, Dewan Chand and the two Kirpals, one the Guru's maternal uncle and the other an Udasi Mahant. Kirpal (Mahant) hit Hayat Khan on the head and killed the deserter. This was quickly followed by Sahib Chand's entry into the fray to kill the bloody Khan from Khorasan. At this juncture Pir Budhu[1]

1. In Bachittar Natak, there is no mention of Pir Budhu Shah's help to the Guru, nor does 'Guru Bilas' contain any allusion to it. The author of the Panth Parkash, however, makes a clear mention of the help rendered by Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura. Dr. I. B. Bannerjee, basing his account on Bachittar Natak and 'Gur Bilas' does not incorporate this fact in his account of the battle of Bhangani.

   We however, disagree with the learned Doctor. Firstly because he gives too much weight to the negative evidence; secondly the tradition is so strong that it cannot be brushed aside without discovering some positive facts to the contrary and thirdly the relics in the custody of the descendants of Budhu Shah bear eloquent testimony to Budhu Shah's timely help to the Guru.

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Budhu Shah takes part in the battle

Shah along with his seven sons and 500 men arrived to add to the small reserve that Gobind possessed. Upto this time Fateh Shah's side was on the defensive. Then Raja Gopal and Hari Chand launched vigorous offensive. The Guru to counteract it, ordered Jit Mal and his men to advance. For some time, the Guru's prospects looked very bleak. At this crisis Jit Mal with his spear, struck Hari Chand who fell down senseless and had to be carried off the field. In the confusion, that followed Kesri Shah Jaswalia and Modhur Shah Dadwalia, two of the prominent Chiefs on Fateh Shah's side left the field with all their troops and Gaji Chand of Chandel stood exhausted surprised and shocked. A general route was clearly in sight, but at this juncture, Hari Chand regained consciousness and immediately became alive to the duties of the leader. He recalled the hill troops and the Pathans and the last phase of the battle started. The Guru sent Sangho Shah or Shah Sangram as the Guru would call him later, to foil the offensive of Hari Chand. He fought hard, led his men well, killed Najabat Khan and many of his men, but only at the cost of his life. The Guru who had not taken actual part in the fray was now strung to action. He moved forward, struck Bhikhan Shah on the face The blow was so hard that Bhikhan fled from the field, leaving his horse behind, which was immediately despatched. Now began the great duel of bows and arrows with Hari Chand. The Guru had a narrow escape three times, but ultimately took aim and killed Hari Chand. The death of Hari Chand disarrayed the forces and they had a disorderly retreat The Guru's victory was complete.[1]

Guru's victory

The Guru honoured the soldiers and generals

Shortly after, the Guru went to the place where lay the dead bodies of Sangho Shah. Jit Mal and other brave Sikhs. He ordered the slain on both the sides to be disposed of with great honour The bodies of the Sikhs were cremated, of the Hindus thrown into the adjacent river and of the Muslims burried with all solemnity. The wounded were properly tended.

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1. Bachittar Natak, viii, 25.

The Guru says in the Bachittar Natak. Hari Chand in his rage drew forth his arrow. He struck my steed with one and then discharged another at me but God preserved me and it only grazed my ear in its flight. His third arrow penetrated the buckle of my waist-belt and reached my body but wounded not. It is only God who protected me knowing me his servant. When I felt the touch of the arrow, my anger was killed. I took up my bow and began to discharge arrows in abundance. Upon this my adversaries began to flee. I took aim and killed the young Chief, Hari Chand.

(Bachittar Natak, viii, pp. 29-33)

(Macauliff's translation in Sikh Religion, vol. v, p. 44)

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On returning to the fort of Paonta, the Guru held a *darbar*, bestowed robes of honour and other gifts upon the valient soldiers and generals. Pir Budhu Shah was offered fallen hair of the Guru, a turban, a comb, and a certificate of appreciation. Those who kept themselves away from the battle were driven out of the place. As the Guru himself says, 'He fostered the faithful and rooted out all the wicked.' (Bachittar Natak).

Consequences of the Battle of Bhangani

Strengthened the morale

(A) The victory in the battle of Bhangani was of far-reaching importance. It strengthened the morale of the Sikhs. It led to new awareness on their part. They discovered themselves as well as the genius that the Guru was. Their faith in the Guru redoubled; many of them arrogated supernatural powers to the Guru. Since the Guru did not acquire even an inch of territory or gained any advantage, whatsoever, the cause he championed received added strength. His fame spread far and wide with the result that the supply of arms to the Guru increased and a large number of the persons offered themselves to be enrolled in the Guru's army.

Kinetic power of the ideology realised

(B) The Guru, on his part, felt convinced that the kinetic power of the ideology coupled with suitable organisation was more than a match for the massed might of the princes and the potentates, and when the ideology also happened to be armed in steel, the only language the tyranny understood and respected, it was a fateful marriage of spirit and sword. It also became clear to him, that mercenary soldiers, the persons surcharged with ideas other than his, would not do and he would have to depend upon on these persons who were soaked in the mission he upheld. This thing impelled the Guru to have a fresh look on the whole issue of recruitment. No wonder it was probably because of the step the Guru took in this direction that in future wars of the Guru the desertions were well-nigh non-existent.

Only the men soaked in mission are dependable

Change in the attitude of the Hill Rajas

(C) The hill rajas also viewed the whole issue afresh. No doubt, ideologically they were poles asunder from the Guru, but goaded by their self-interest, they wanted rapprochment with the Guru. This was particularly so in the case of Bhim Chand who, flushed in the exultations owing to his victory against the combined forces of Bushahr, Mandi and Kothai, had made plans to thwart the Mughal over-lordship, and thus to be relieved of the burdens of the annual tributes they had to pay to the Mughal Government. The Guru who must have perceived that the Mughal rule under Aurangzeb at that stage was more dangerous as compared with their feudalistic

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tendencies, thought it prudent and politic to enter into agreement with Bhim Chand.

Men of Letters rallied round the Guru

(D) The battle of Bhangani was important from another point of view also. The Guru's fame attracted poets, singers and thinkers to his court. All of them, under his directions, addressed themselves to the task of moulding Indian culture in such a way that it should articulate the people to be able to embark upon the plans of regenerating the society. Hence the Guru made the people, fleshless and bloodless skeletons of the dead body of past India, realise that in their fingers were some priceless rings of jewels treasured up by their ancestors, and within the embrace of their stinking corpses were preserved a good many ancient treasure-chests. Hitherto the people's psyche which was wrapped in layers after layers of obscurantism, fatalism and mysterious powers of gods began to understand that their own efforts and their will to resist tyrannies, even with the help of sword, would help them in ushering in a new era.

Agreement with Bhim Chand

Reached Anandpur

All the same, the Guru did not stay at Paonta for long. He soon entered into a regular agreement with Bhim Chand before moving to Anandpur.[1] While encamped at Laharpur on return to Anandpur via Sadhaura, he sent his army to Anandpur and stayed there with only a few followers. From there he ordered his men to go to Makhowal but himself proceeded to Toka and leaving Nahan entered the Ramgarh State and stayed at Tabra for more than a week. He then went to Raipur in response to the invitation of the Rani of that place. After this sojourn, the Guru reached Anandpur.[2]

Dr. Fauja Singh's views

The Guru did not allude to what made him leave for Anandpur. According to Dr Fauja Singh 'Anandpur was strategically a much better place than Paonta in the state of Nahan,' and that is why after about three years only, the Guru had returned to Anandpur.[3] But this does not explain the whole thing. The attitude of the ruler of Nahan contributed a lot in

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1. Bhai Vir Singh says that the agreement was signed at Paonta. We do not agree with this contention of his. Vir Singh argues on the presumption that Bhim Chand led the attack on the Guru in the battle of Bhangani. But this presumption is open to objection on the ground that the Guru makes no mention of the Kahlur Raja's participation in the battle of Bhangani. We concur with J.S. Grewal and S.S. Bal in their view that the formality, if there was any, was effected at Anandpur though a tacit understanding must have been reached through some emissary when Gobind was staying with the Rani of of Raipur.

2. J.S. Grewal and S.S. Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh*.

3. Refer to *Bachittar Natak*.

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arriving at the decision on the part of the Guru. Medini Parkash not only remained aloof from the battle, which was as much his own as it was Guru Gobind's, but also avoided seeing the Guru after the battle. This thing sorely disappointed the Guru. Thus sandwitched between Fateh Shah as his avowed enemy on one side and Medini Parkash, indifferent friend on the other, the Guru was bound to rethink and reshape his policies. In the meanwhile, Bhim Chand's approach to the Guru for reconciliation enabled the Guru to clinch the issue. He entered into agreement with him and returned to Anandpur forthwith.

Guru Gobind Singh used the changed circumstances and the re-approachment with Bhim Chand to build up his headquarter with a remarkable boldness. He renewed his contacts with his disciples in the Malwa and the Doaba. He built a chain of forts around Anandpur and garrisoned them with his men. He re-organised his Durbar and rapidly increased the strength of his army.

Expedition of Alif Khan

Two years after Guru Gobind Singh came back to Anandpur, the combination of the Rajas all over the hills stopped paying the annual tribute. The faujdars of Kangra and Jammu, who used to collect tributes, naturally sought help from the Government of Lahore. A strong contingent under Mian Khan with Alif Khan as his deputy was sent against the Hill Chiefs.

The object of this expedition was to crush resistance simultaneously in the Jammu and Kangra regions. Mian Khan himself went to Jammu and sent Alif Khan to Kangra.[1]

Alif Khan moved to Nadaun instead of Kangra. His aim was to make Nadaun his base and therefrom to attack Bhim Chand. His movement was quick and he thought that he would not allow Bhim Chand to have any help from outside. He selected an elevated ground and raised a wooden fortress on it. Besides this, he asked the Faujdar at Kangra to prevail upon the Hill Rajas who had not joined the rebels to come with their forces to Nadaun. Kirpal of Kangra and Dayal of Bijarwal joined Alif Khan.

Bhim Chand, contrary to the expectations of Alif Khan, acted with speed and alacrity. Raj Singh (Gopal of Bachittar Natak) and Ram Singh of Jaswal rushed to his help. The Rajas of distant states also sent help, although they did not come

1. Refer to *Bachittar Natak*.

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themselves. Prithvi Chand of Dhadwal[1] sent his contingent. Sukhdev, a *gazi* from Jasrot also came to participate in the impending war. Bhim Chand specially invited the Guru on this occasion, who came in person at the head of strong contingent equipped with bows, arrows, swords, spears and a few muskets, perhaps with the view that the movement for the non-payment of tributes symbolised the spirit of defiance against the Mughal Imperialism—a pre-condition for the movement of liberation to gather strength.

Though Bhim Chand had mustered a strong force, yet it was no easy a task to wrest victory. The enemy was entrenched in a fortress, though it was not very strong, being made of wood, yet it assured advantage to its occupants of a cover denied to Bhim Chand. Moreover, Alif Khan's forces being arranged on an elevation held distinct advantage over Bhim Chand's forces.

Bhim Chand opened the attack. The sharp arrows and the shots could make no impact on the enemy because of their position and struck only the wooden rafters of the fortress. Bhim Chand led another attack invoking 'Hanuman' for help but to no effect. The troops of Bhim Chand began to grow indifferent. At this critical juncture, the Guru played his part most effectively in the battle, He writes "Then this Thy insignificant creature (the Guru) took up his gun and aimed it at the heart of a Raja (Dayal). Fighting bravely he fell to the ground. Even when falling the proud warrior in his rage shouted 'kill'. I put aside the gun and took up my bow, shot four arrows with my right hand and three with my left. I could not see whether they struck any body. By that time, God turned the battle in our favour. The enemy was driven into the river... ... Arrows and bullets flew in abundance as if warriors were playing Holi".[2]

Alif Khan and his men fled. They crossed the river Beas and Bhim Chand's victory was complete. The Hill Rajas hastened to their capitals. Guru Gobind Singh stayed there for eight days and then marched with his followers to Anandpur. Bhim Chand alone with his troops remained there behind at Nadaun where soon after, he reached an understanding with Alif Khan through Kirpal who acted as intermediary.

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1. According to Bannerjee, he was the chief of Madhwar, a hill state in the Jammu group. According to Hutchenson and Vogel vol.1, p. 212, the later chiefs of the state of Datarpur bore the title of Dharwal we feel he was more likely to be the Chief of Datarpur.

2. Refer to *Bachiitar Natak*, section ix.

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The Guru and his followers while still on their way to Anandpur—Makhowal, heard that Bhim Chand had entered into an agreement with Alif Khan. They naturally felt upset at Bhim Chand's entering into agreement with Alif Khan and expressed their resentment by plundering the inhabitants of Alsun.[1]

It is difficult to determine as to which extent the Guru incited the Sikhs to loot the said village; but it is certain that the Guru regarded the act of Bhim Chand as a betrayal of the trust reposed in him by him. The only gain of the Guru as a result of this battle was that he made friends with Raj Singh of Jaswan and Ram Singh of Guler.

The experience of the Guru at Nadaun convinced the Guru that he could not hope to depend for long on the friendship of his two neighbours and continued to build up his strength. He during the next three years and nine months when he had undisturbed peace planned his way to greater armed strength. He gave his army a strong social base by giving a call to his followers not only to come to Anandpur in increasingly greater numbers every year but also to make the city their home. But the Guru's preoccupations in raising the army did not blind him to his duties, to his religious duties. Once well-settled at Anandpur, he took up the completion of 'Akal Ustat' in 1691 which he had started writing in 1684. The composition is considered to be one of the best works of the Guru and is divided into six parts. In the first part there is invocation to God who is looked upon Timeless, Omnipresent, All steel and Supreme Nature. The second part deals with the futility of worldly pomp and power. The third part is a satire on the various penances and austerities. The fourth part relates to the popular theological queries on the spiritual aspects of life and philosophy of Hindu Shastras. The fifth part sings the praises of Chandi. The last part is a hymn to God in all His splendour.

Dilawar Khan's attempt to weaken Guru's Power

These activities of the Guru brought rich dividends. But his large congregations and rapidly increasing military strength seemed to have unnerved the Kangra Faujdar[2] and possibly a few Rajas —so much so that they sought Aurangzeb's directions as to how to meet the menace.

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1. Macauliffe says that the village of Alsun was situated in the territories of Bhim Chand of Kahlur but he gives a somewhat garbled version of the plunder. We are told that the inhabitants refused to sell supplies to the Guru's troops and at last the Guru was compelled to order his followers that supplies be forcibly taken at current rates. But this view is not supported by an evidence. The weight of the evidence of the more important records is in favour of view that the entire village was looted as a mark of retaliation against Bhim Chand who made his submission before Alif Khan.

2. Bal S.S., Grewal J.S. : *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 96.

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The Emperor, in response to this representation, directed his Faujdar in November 1693 to prevent the Guru from assembling his Sikhs,[1] Accordingly the Faujdar of Kangra,[2] Dilawar Khan, began a series of attacks with the intention of breaking the Guru's power at Anandpur.

Khanzada's Expedition

He sent his son popularly known as Khanzada in Bachittar Natak to curb the power of the Guru at Anandpur in November-December 1694. He framed a plan to take the Guru by surprise. He crossed the Sutlej under the cover of darkness at about mid-night, but just then a Guru's servant, Alam Khan[3] informed the Guru. Immediately alarm was sounded. The Sikhs with unparalleled alacrity and promptitude took up their arms and with the zeal of a crusader arranged themselves in battle array to give a hot welcome to the enemy. The quick formations of the Sikhs bewildered the enemy and the guns of the Sikhs which began to discharge volleys of shots and emit murderous fire, altogether terrified them and they were constrained to reel back with their weapons unused. While going back, the soldiers of Khanzada plundered village Barwan, stayed for some time at Bhalan and then returned to Dilawar Khan. Thus the Guru got the victory without a fight as he writes: "Through God's favour, the wretched fools could not even touch me, and they fled."

Hussain Khan's Expedition

The failure of Khanzada piqued Dilawar Khan to plan on a bigger scale a war on the Guru. Dilawar Khan chose Hussain Khan perhaps the ablest general with the Kangra Faujdar to lead it. Hussain Khan marched with fury and carried all before. He brought the Raja of Dhadwal to his knees, and plundered Dun. Kirpal Chand, the brother of the Raja of Kangra joined him. Bhim Chand too cast his lot with Hussain, most probably with a view to achieving double-purpose; winning the favour of the Mughals and annihilating the Guru and the movement he was piloting.

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1. *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (R.A.S.) 1, 1677-99 an extract of a news letter dated 20.11.1693 in the Akhbarat runs as follows : News from Sirhind—Gobind declares himself to be Guru Nanak. Faujdar ordered to prevent him from assembling (his Sikhs). See Teja Singh Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs* 1.65 f.n2.
2. Gokul Chand Narang calls him the Governor of Kangra. See *Transformation of Sikhism* ed. II, p. 154.
3. According to Sunder Singh, the Author of the *Battles of Guru Gobind Singh*, Alam Khan was Guru's Deoridar. According to I. B. Bannerjee, he was Guru's attendant *Evolution of the Khalsa* Vol. II. p. 85.

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All the three (Hussain, Kirpal and Bhim Chand) alongwith their armies made plans to proceed to Anandpur, but just then, an incident occurred which changed the course of future developments. The Guru had assessed their design and made marching preparation to foil it. On hearing the submission of Bhim Chand and Kirpal, Gopal, the Raja of Guler proceeded to negotiate with Hussain. Flattered and blinded by his earlier successes, Hussain Khan did not condescend to take note of the difficulties of Gopal, and threatened him with dire consequences if he did not pay ten thousand rupees. Gopal pleaded his inability to pay and came back. Thereupon, Hussain laid siege at the town of Guler. Finding that the inhabitants of the town were incapable of withstanding the rigours of the siege Gopal sued for peace but nothing less than ten thousand rupees could satisfy Hussain. Thereupon the helpless Gopal approached the Guru who sent Sangatia and seven other Sikhs to re-open the negotiations on his behalf. Sangatia on his own security brought the latter in Hussain's camp to negotiate, but the two parties could not reach any amicable settlement. Kirpal and Bhim Chand began to conspire to arrest Gopal but the latter escaped in time. Kirpal lost his temper and raged in fury. He together with Kimmat, Himmat and Hussain lost no time to attack the city. Fight commenced with vehemence. Hussain's bravery won a lot of applause but a sharp-pointed arrow struck Hussain dead. Raja Kirpal and several other brave officers such as Himmat and Kimmat fell fighting. On the side of Gopal, there was a heavy loss. Sangatia and his seven comrades were also killed.

Gopal got victory. The Guru felt jubilant and correctly comprehended that the rain of bullets that was originally intended for me was showered by the Almighty elsewhere.[1]

Expedition of Jujhar Singh and Chandel Rai

This catastrophe further irked Dilawar Khan who decided to send yet another expedition. Jujhar Singh and Chandel Rai were sent to Jaswan but they could not achieve the purpose. They undoubtedly captured Bhalan, a startegic place in the state. But before they could proceed further, Gaj Singh of Jaswal fell upon them. Jujhar Singh and Chandel Rai fought like lions but were soon overpowered. Jujhar Singh was killed in action and Chandel Rai fled.

The obvious result of the defeat of the Imperial forces was that the Mughal administration in the hill area fell in disarray, the Sikhs became hardened in their attitude towards the Imperial authority and the host of the Hill Rajas, in defiance

1. *Bachittar Natak.*

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their agreement, hesitated to pay their annual tributes. This thing caused anxiety to Aurangzeb who realised that something drastic had become absolutely necessary and accordingly sent one of his sons, Prince Muazzam, afterwards known as Bahadur Shah, for the restoration of order in the Hills. The prince took up his position in August 1696.[1] From there he directed operations in the Hill area. He deputed Mirza Beg to teach a lesson to the Hill Rajas. "He inflicted upon the defeat after defeat, gave up their country to plunder, set to fire villages, took hundreds of prisoners and in order to make a lesson of them had them shaved clean, and their faces blackened, seated them on donkeys and made an exhibition of them throughout the disturbed area.[2] After Mirza Beg, the Prince sent four more officers who, side by side, their having chastised the Hill Rajas, plundered the houses of the apostates who had escaped destruction at Mirza Khan's hand.[3]

The Guru, no doubt, passed through troubled times[4], but he was left untouched. The reason seems to be the successful pleading on the Guru's behalf, of a Khatri of Delhi, named Nand Chand, who possessed some influence with the Prince.[5]

Soon after, the Guru himself was called upon to fight an action. Two hill chiefs being jealous of the growing power of the Guru, finding their opportunity when the Guru with only a few Sikhs was sporting in the Dun, fell on him. The Sikhs gave a determined fight but since the number of the opponents was too large, they had to retreat a little. In the meantime, a timely reinforcement under Ude Singh reached, that turned the tables. Alam Chand lost his right arm, and left the field. Balia Chand got wounded and his soldiers took to their heels. The Guru returned victorious.

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1. Refer to Khafi Khan's account in Elliot and Dawson, p. 153.
2. Narang G.C., *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 156.
3. *Bachittar Natak, Section* xiii. According to I. B. Bannerjee, the statement of the Guru that the desertees were ruthlessly punished by Mirza Beg and his successors need not be taken as literary true. The Guru's object seems to have to preach 'a homely on loyalty one's spiritual guide'. In fact, there occurs nothing the verses in question that would entitle us to connect the Hill Rajas themselves with those desertees. He, however, feels that there is nothing improbable in the statement. Because of the Guru's influence with the prince, there is nothing strange that the Guru's enemies were punished severely.
4. Refer to *Hukam Nama* dated 2nd August 1696 (2nd Bhadon Sambat 1753 BK) to Bhais Triloka, Rama, and the entire congregation under them to come to him with a force. For English translation see Ganda Singh, *Patiala & East Punjab—Historical Background*, p. 44.
5. *Gur Bilas* by Bhai Sukha Singh, pp. 171-3, 334-5.

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CAUSES OF THE CREATION OF THE KHALSA

Aurangzeb's policy towards the non-Muslims

Aurangzeb, even after the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur was relentless, and the non-Muslims including the Sikhs continued to suffer because of his discriminatory religious policy towards them. In the seventees, the Emperor's attempt to appeal to Muslim religious divines (*Ulemas*) for support in respect of every political action is too well-known to need a fresh look. Since these people were parochial in outlook and approach, they committed excesses on non-Muslims and did not deliver good even to their own men—Muslims.

Commenting on the conduct of the orthodox Muslim Divines (*ulemas*) Mahabat Khan says 'since these men are selling their knowledge and manners for the company of kings, to rely upon them was neither in accordance with the divinely prescribed path, nor suited to the ways of the world. Thus these men are robbers in every way. The country is being laid waste; the army disheartened, the peasantry ravaged, the lowly crying of distress, the higher ones seeking to raise disturbances. As the saying is, the finances are given over to the Qazi and the Qazi is satisfied only with bribe.'

Nobles' attitude

Secondly, the Muslim nobles, who had taken cue from Aurangzeb and also had been even tempted by the idea of enlarging the area to be available for Jagirs pursued the policy with zeal with the result that the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab suffered a lot.

Sad plight of the peasantry

Apart from it, this policy had, by implication, its adverse effect on the Hindu and Sikh peasantry of the Punjab. In general, all peasants were unhappy because the condition of the peasantry had deteriorated towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, but the Sikh and Hindu peasants suffered more because apart from sharing the general adverse condition they had to experience the religious discrimination as well. The zamindars and jagirdars in the Punjab being mostly Muslims were obviously comparatively more arrogant in their attitude towards the non-Muslim peasantry.

It was a momentous phenomenon fraught with historical significance of great magnitude. Since the majority of Guru's followers consisted of peasantry, he regarded it obligatory to do something to help them. The Guru must have perceived all this oppression on the peasants, forming the bulk of his disciples and the discontent seething and bleeding them. The Guru decided to transform the force let loose by the widespread suppressed discontent among the peasants into the moral force ready to combat all types of tyranny including that perpetrated

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on them. This the Guru did by creating the Khalsa in order to usher in a new era.

Complications because of hereditary principle as applied to Guruship

The institutions of Guruship & Masands had also created many complications, and thrown the development of Sikhism into jeopardy. It is well known that the concept of the institution of the Guru was an integral part of Sikhism. Guru Nanak was Guru because it was avowed that the Guruship of Nanak was derived directly from the Guru.[1] With Guru Angad and his immediate successors, it could not have been direct and immediate. Indeed to them the words and message of the Guru as transmitted to them were considered as Guru, guruship being supposed to have been transmitted to them through the words and the mission that went with them. Guru Arjan became Guru because of having been the son of Guru Ram Das and it was from this cue that Guruship became hereditary, a principle, which, conceptually speaking, was against the concept of the institution of the Guru. Thus there was the need to rectify the mistakes.

Furthermore, since the hereditary principle and law of primogeniture were considered as adjuncts to each other by the people, Dhir Mal, the living eldest son of Guru Hargobind and Ram Rai, the eldest son of Har Rai began to dispute the succession to Gaddi. They turned hostile to the central Sikh church and formed rival sects and formed common cause with the Mughal authorities to disrupt the Sikh authority. Besides this, the Guru realised that any hereditary institution, particularly of socio-religious nature and of an expanding society, was liable to deteriorate in character and to become authoritarian. As a matter of fact, there is evidence in the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh himself to show that the masands had actually turned authoritarian and used to indulge in corrupt practices that led to the exploitation of the poor Sikhs.

In view of all this, the Guru must do something in this direction. He made up his mind to abolish personal guruship and invest it with something permanent and inviolate. There was Granth Sahib, by then well established as the book enshrining the words of the Gurus and considered as sacred as the Gurus themselves. On matters other than spiritual, there was the institution of the Panchayat with which all Punjabis were familiar.

"All that was needed was to adapt the Panchayat to the need of the time. Between the two *i.e.* the Granth and the elected representatives of the community (Panth) both the spiritual and secular functions of the Guru could be taken care of. The

1. This is as per evidence of Guru himself.

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Granth could become the spiritual Guru, the Panth itself the secular Guru and the combination of the two the mystic entity".[1]

Institution of Masands

The institution of masands as it ceased to serve also needed drastic action. Masands, together with Sants, formed the first of the organisation that Guru Amar Das founded and Guru Arjan Dev developed. For several dacades, it served the cause of Sikhism creditably well; but as time rolled by, many evils crept into the institution so as to make it unfit for any laudable task. The reasons were not far to seek. The office of a masand, which in the first instance was filled by men of piety and integrity became hereditary in the families of the first incumbents, and in course of time, fell into the hands of those persons who were neither serious about their episcopal duties, nor possessed the requisite integrity in respect of financial matters. The disputes about the succession to the Guruship at the death of Guru Hargobind which led to a positive weakening of the Guru's position and prestige and the simultaneous existence of rival claimants provided the masands opportunities to become recalcitrant and independent entities.

Thus in the Guru's eyes the masands had become despicable, preferring their mundane self-interest to their obligations towards the Guru. In view of this, they, at any rate, did possess neither the capabilities nor the honesty to execute the programmes of the Guru.

The following remarks from the *Dasam Granth* containing Guru Gobind Singh's personal testimony of the views and the practices of the masands voice a vehement protest against the institution of masands:—

> If any one serves the masands, they say 'Fateh' and give us all thine offerings.
>
> Whatever belongs to you should hastily be offered to none but ourselves.
>
> Think of us night and day, and mention not anyone's name, even by mistake.
>
> If they hear of any one desirous of giving, they run to him even if it be night and they are pleased not unless they receive something.
>
> They put oil into their eyes and they make people believe that they are shedding tears.
>
> If they find anyone wealthy among their adherents, they serve the food and see that he takes it.

1. Khushwant Singh : *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 81.

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If they find him to be poor, they give him nothing
and even if he begs, they do not show him their faces.

Thus the things reached such a pass that the masands who had been foremost among the Guru's auxiliaries became, in course of time, the greatest counterpoise to his authority.

Time demanded perfect harmony between the Guru and the Sikhs but the masand's mediacy fanned groupism among the Sikhs by shifting their loyalties from one group to another to different claimants to Guruship. The Guru needed money for executing his plans, and the masands were more interested in appropriating the offerings for their own use. Perfect co-operation to be extended to the Guru was the imperative for the success of the Sikh movement, but the masands were busy in building their own followings. The contemporary and semi-contemporary Sikh sources are full of anecdotes high-lighting the masands' impetuous callousness, avarice and moral corruption.

That the Guru felt extremely sore about the masands is clear from the Hukamnamas issued to various Sangats before his final decision of winding up the order of the masands, on the Baisakhi day. Sukha Singh suggests that having been convinced of the jobbery of the masands, Guru employed punitive measures against them. Some of the masands were consigned to the flames of a bonfire and after spilling oil on their heads, they were burnt, while some others were hung on the gallows or pierced with arrows on burnt on the hearth-place. The final dissolution of the order came about on the Baisakhi Day when the Guru formally abolished the order of the masands and established direct contacts with the Sikhs.

After the Baisakhi of A.D. 1699, the Sikhs were asked to send their offerings to the Guru through the authorised persons or to bring them personally to Anandpur. They were also asked not to associate themselves with the masands and their followers. Indeed, the earliest evidence available on the point leaves us in no doubt that the removal of the masands was one of primary objectives of the Guru.[1]

Dissentient sects

Intimately connected with the suppression of the masands was the question of the dissentient sects viz. the Minas, the Dhirmalias and Ram Raiyas. Har Das, the son of Meharban was still active and was keeping control of the central shrine of the Sikhs at Amritsar. He was making a fervent bid

1. *Gur Sobha*, 18-21, 24, 27 & 36 of the *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* dated the 13th May, 1710 contains the description of the emergence of the Khalsa as a result of the complete dissolution of the masand system. *Bachittar Natak*, Section xiii Chapter 11.

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to popularise the compositions of Meharban and in his own code of conduct he discreetly leaned towards Brahmanism. Dhirmal, Guru Hari Rai's elder brother and Ram Rai, the eldest son of the Guru, had already done their worst to gain Guruship. The example of these claimants was not lost upon the other members of Sodhi family and it has already been seen how on the death of Guru Har Krishan, twenty two of them simultaneously claimed the Guru-Gaddi. Many of the Sodhis began to consider themselves as entitled to the services of the Sikhs in general and appointed their own masands. A great disruptive force was thus let loose in Sikhism, of which the masands were not slow to take the fullest advantage. The greed of these aspirants after the guruship and the recalcitrance of the masands fed each other and soon brought the entire movement to the brink of disaster.

It was, therefore, found imperative that some serious step should be taken. No wonder, the Guru denounced the Minas, the Dhirmalias and the Ram Raiyas in unequivocal terms. In 1699, the Sikhs were solemnly prohibited from having social intercourse with the descendants or followers of Prithi Chand, Dhir Mal, Ram Rai or Masands who had fallen away from the tenets and principles of Guru Nanak.[1]

Hill Rajas' Intransigence to the appeals of the Guru to rise

The Guru had worked among the people of semi-independent states of Shivaliks and had tried to awaken in them the sense of the responsibility which they owed to the society. But he soon discovered that being steeped in superstition and old ideas of religion, they could not rise above the caste and racial prejudices to strive for any national purpose.

With a view to broaden the outlook of the people, it was the need of the hour that the Guru should resolve to break the old shackles with greater precision than had been done before and re-organise the society on the basis of common belief and common aspirations so as to enable the people to launch relentless struggle against political tyranny of the Mughals and socio-religious tyranny of the Hindu priestly classes of the Hindus and the orthodox Muslims alike.

He had enough experience of the behaviour of the Rajput potentates, who were interested more in maintaining their positions than in other things. Social reforms and reconstruction of the society were a far cry for them. Sometimes they would make a common cause with the enemy and try to harm the Guru their deliverer, as Bhim Chand and others had done in the Hussaini war. In fact, the Guru was convinced that the general stuff of the hill people and their Rajas would not achieve the

1. Macauliffe : *Sikh Religion*, vol. v, p. 95.

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purpose; he will have to do something else to achieve his mission. The creation of the Khalsa was an attempt in this direction. In fact, the Khalsa embodied in itself all-out challenge to the *Jati*-based society wedded to archaic values.

Social Complexion of the Sikh Community

The social complexion of the disciples of the Guru also demanded some modifications in the ideological approach. Upto the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the composition of the Sikhs had undergone a distinct change. The Jats of Majha and Malwa had entered into the fold of Sikhism in a large number. They had their own tribal culture and their distinct behavioural pattern. They were opposed to sloth and traditional passivity, the bane of Indian society for centuries bygone. They were not rigid in their prejudices based on caste, food and various types of superstition. They, being the bulk of the Sikhs, were bound to affect the Sikh religion and society. The Sikh religion must create an atmosphere wherein their root tendencies might be utilized for the benefit of the community. Next to them were the people belonging to low castes of the society who embraced Sikhism. Their primary need was to have dignified social status and an atmosphere which should enable them to raise their head high without any fear just as the people of the higher classes did. Opposed to both these classes were Khatries, Brahmins and Jats who as a class could ill-brook the Jats and the low caste people being raised in the social scale. Many of them could comment on the prevalent *jati*-ridden society but were not prepared to completely abnegate the caste principles. Moreover, the Sikhs on the whole were still in the grip of various sectarian movements such as Nathism, Shaivism, Devism, etc. They also needed a fresh brainwash.

Thus sociological convass bore only a confused picture of the society. The Guru must rub off some unrequired contours or draw new ones to ensure the onward march of Sikh movement.

Contradictions on Polemical Plane

Another thing which prompted the Guru to inaugurate the order of the Khalsa was the contradictions which developed on the polemical plane. Since the time of Guru Hargobind, the hitherto implicit of 'Miri' in Sikhism had become explicit. In course of time the movement acquired accretions which were distinctly political. Extreme danger and the character of the Sikhs contributed a good deal to its further development. This development confused many of the Sikhs because some of them could not understand Sikhism in all its imports while some were opposed to it because they were positive that the Sikhism was treading the road not recommended by Guru Nanak. In view of this, the future of Sikhism depended upon as to how these contradictory forces were united under the banner of one ideal and how uniformity was secured within the system itself in

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order to assure the cohesion of the secular movement that was to be based upon it.

Guru's Mission

In this context the Guru presented his own mission. In *Bachittar Natak* which was composed not long before the Khalsa was instituted, the Guru seems to have believed that he had been chosen by God to establish his own faith, extirpate the evil and uphold the virtuous :—

"The Divine Guru sent me for religion's sake
On this aceount, I have come into the world
Extend the faith every where
Seize and destroy the evil and sinful.
Understand this, ye holymen, in your souls
I assumed birth for the purpose
Of spreading the faith, saving saints and extirpating all tyrants."

A timely adjustment between the forces of evil and those of good through the use of physical force was an essential ingredient of the moral world. God could not tolerate the unhappiness of His Saints who must be protected from the wicked.

To this purpose the use of force as a last resort in favour of the good was legitimate. Krishan, Ram who made use of force had peculiar fascination for Guru Gobind Singh. The power which was manifested through the human agency was God's, for an important attribute of God in Guru Gobind Singh's view was precisely this power.

To realize his misson, it was necessary that the Guru should have an organisation to serve as the instrument. Hence the mission also became one of the most important causes of the creation of the Khalsa.

The sociological changes, religious strifes brought about by the persecuting policy of Aurangzeb, the prevailing corruption, ignorance of superstition and his personal resentment at his father's execution, the impotence of the Hill Rulers coupled with the sense of Mission—all these things prevailed upon the Guru to contemplate some serious step, the outcome of which was Khalsa.

CREATION OF THE KHALSA & ITS SINGNIFICANCE

Gathering at Anandpur

The Guru decided to put his plan into operation on the Ist of Baisakh 1756 BK (March 30, 1699). He sent

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Hukamnamas[1] to his followers inviting them to visit Anandpur on the Baisakhi festival. He specially exhorted the Sikhs to come with their hair and beards unshorn.[2]

Five Beloveds (Panj Piyara)

Thus the Sikhs who gathered at Anandpur were in a large number. After the morning service, the Guru drew out his sword and cried, 'Is there anyone here who would lay down his life for Dharma ?' It was an amazing call and no wonder, it struck consternation among the gathering. The Guru repeated the call. At the third call, Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore rose from his seat and offered his head. The Guru seized the man by arm and dragged him into the adjoining enclosure where a few goats[3] had been kept tied (the fact which was not known to the people), and seating him there killed one of the goats. He came out with the sword drenched in blood and showing it to the multitude asked for another man. There was again silence and when the Guru had repeated his request for the third time, Dharm Das, a jat from Delhi, came forward to secrifice himself for the Guru. He too was taken to the enclosure, was seated by the side of Daya Ram and another goat was killed. In the same way, three other men stood up one after the other and offered themselves for the sacrifice. One was Mohkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka, another was Himmat, a cook of Jagan Nath, and the third was Sahib Chand a barber of Bidar.

After the five had thus volunteered, the Guru opened up the tent to show five headless goats while the five persons who had offered themselves for sacrifice sat in splendid robes. With these 'Five Beloveds' as they came to be called, the Guru proceeded to lay anew the foundation of Sikhism. *Thus a Khatri, a Brahmin and three low-castes* (*Shudra*) *formed the nucleus of the Khalsa.*

New Initiation Ceremony

Then the Guru proceeded to initiate them to his new order by a new method. The method of initiation which Guru Nanak had introduced and which had hitherto been current in Sikhism was *charan pahul* according to which the neophites were asked to drink the water, which had been touched by the Guru's toe. During Guru Arjan, this initiation rite underwent a little change. The water was not touched by the Guru's toes but simply placed under the cot of the Guru. Evidently the ideal behind the rite was to develop the sense of surrender and

1. The Guru sent Fiat (*Hukam Namas*) to the following effect to all the Sangats, wherever they were : The Sikhs should come to me wearing long hair. Once a man becomes a Sikh he should never shave himself. He should not touch tobacco and should receive baptism of the sword. *Suraj Parkash* iii 21. See also *Gur Sobha*, v.
2. *Gur Sobha*, p. 18.
3. *Gur Bilas* by Koer Singh, p. 127.

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humility. But in the context of the changed situation, this ideal was no longer required. Accordingly the Guru changed its entire spirit.

Preparation of 'Amrits'

The Guru took water in an iron vessel, stirred it with Khanda or a double-edged dagger, to the recitations of the hymns--Japji; Jap Sahib; Anand, Swayyas and Chaupai. Sugar crystals called *Patashas*, which incidentally the Guru's wife, Mata Sahib Kaur brought at the moment were mixed in the water. This was considered to be propitiatory in the sense that the initiates would henceforth be blessed with the grace of womanly sweetness.

Baptism

The nectar, thus prepared, was administered to the Five Beloveds from the same bowl to signify their initiation into the casteless fraternity of the Khalsa. The Guru gave them five palmfuls of Amrit to drink. He sprinkled it five times on their hair and their eyes and caused them all to repeat '*WAHGURU JI KA KHALSA, WAHGURU JI KI FATEH.*' At this, the Guru gave them all the appellation of the Singhs or Lions.[1] The most important thing in the process of the preparation of Amrit was the substitution of the double-edged dagger in place of the Guru's toe. This thing marked the shift from *the ideal of humility and surrender to the one of self-assertion and self-reliance.*

Baptism, a rebirth

The baptism symbolised a rebirth by which the initiated were considered as having renounced their previous occupations (Krit Nash) for that of serving the cause of righteousness, of having severed their family ties (Kul Nash) to become the family of Gobind, of having rejected their earlier creeds (Dharma Nash) for the creed of Khalsa; of having given up all ritual (Karm Nash) save that sanctioned by the Sikh Faith.[2] They were to have a unique uniform.

Five K's

They were always to wear five K's. Kes or long unshorn hair gathered in the top-knot, (nor were they to cut any hair of the body); Kanga, or comb; Kirpan, dagger or sword; Kara, steel bracelet; and Kachh, undershort. Without any cost, this measure not only gave a manly bearing and suited to the ideology in which they were nurtured, but also made it impossible for them in future to conceal their identity as some Sikhs at Delhi had done at the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution. Moreover, with these five emblems, the Sikhs would be quite

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1. 'Singh' which is up-Bransh form of the Sanskrit word 'Sinha', meaning lion was commonly used as suffix by the Rajputs, Gurkhas and many other belonging to Hindu Martial classes. Notable thing, however is that all Sikhs are Singhs, all Singhs are not Sikhs.

2. Khushwant Singh : *A History of the Sikhs*, P. 84.

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distinct from both the Hindus and the Muslims, and their group consciousness would be intensified.

Six rules of conduct

In addition to the five emblems, the initiated were to observe six rules of conduct (Rehat). Firstly they were not to cut any hair on any part of their body. Secondly they were disallowed to smoke, chew tobacco or take alcoholic drinks. Thirdly they were not to eat an animal which had been slaughtered by being bled to death, as was customary with the Muslims, but only *Jhatka* meat where the animal had been despatched with one blow. Fourthly, they were forbidden to molest the person of Muslim women. Fifthly, they were to tie turban and not to wear cap. (Joe Sikh Sar Topi dhare, Sat Janam Kushti hoe Mare.) Sixthly, the Guru enjoined upon the Khalsa to be strictly monogamous. Regarding sexual matters, the Guru said that his father Guru Tegh Bahadur had given him these instructions which should serve as a guide to the Sikhs:

"O son, as long as there is life in the body, make this thy sacred duty ever to love thine own wife more and more. Approach not another woman's couch either by mistake or even in a dream. Know, that the love of another's wife is a sharp dagger. Believe me death entereth the body by making love to another's wife. They who think it great cleverness to enjoy another's wife, shall in the end, die the death of dogs". Again the Guru declared :

"Par Nari Ki Sej
bhul supne hun nā Jaiyo"

(Never enjoy, even in dream, the bed of a woman other than your own wife)

The Preceptor-Disciple Identification

The more remarkable episode in this connection was that the Guru having administered Amrit to the Five Sikhs stood up in supplication and with folded-hands begged them to baptise him in the manner as he had baptised them. They were amazed at such a strange request, but he silenced them by saying that he too wanted to be one of them, that as he was their Guru, they collectively should be his Guru. The 'Five Beloved' initiated the Guru to the order of the Khalsa according to new rite. After this, there remained no difference between the baptised Sikhs and the Guru. They were to be his Khalsa, body of his body & soul of his soul, nay his otherself, his beloved ideal (suhird). The Guru thus merged himself in the Khalsa and the whole body of the Khalsa was invested with the dignity of Gurudom. Thenceforward the principle was established that five Sikhs could represent the Khalsa

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and conduct ceremony of initiation. As many as 80000 men were baptised in a few days. The Guru also sent instructions that those who called themselves Sikhs should get themselves confirmed by receiving the new baptism. The baptised Sikhs, were termed as the 'Khalsa'[1]. The term was not without a precedent. In the pro-Khalsa period, the term Khalsa was restricted to such privileged Sikhs as were virtually directly connected with the Gurus and whose subordination to the masands was simply dejure. "The word Khalsa in the sense of the privileged Sikhs occurs in a *Hukamnama* (fiat) issued by Hargobind and also in that issued by Guru Tegh Bahadur"[2]. But with Guru Gobind Singh any one who is baptised by a new method and abides by the instructions of the Guru was the respectable member of the Khalsa Brotherhood.

Apart from wearing five emblems and observing six rules of conduct, the Sikhs were expected not to pay homage to any external object except the Granth, not to recognise caste prejudices, superstitions, empty rituals, esoteric and ascetic practices. They were to have faith that the Guru was always present in the general body of the Khalsa and that wherever even five Sikhs were assembled, the Guru would be with them. They were free to marry themselves without any caste considerations.

No social intercourse with Minas, Dhir Maliyas and Ram Raiyas

But they were to have no social or matrimonial relations with smokers, with persons who shaved, with persons who killed their daughters and with the descendants or followers of Prithi Chand, Dhir Mal, Ram Rai and those masands who had fallen away from the tenets and principles of Guru Nanak. They were not to worship idols, cemeteries or cremation grounds. They were to rise at dawn, bathe and recite the hymns of the Guru.

According to the news-writer of the period, the Guru is reported to have said, "I wish you all to embrace one creed and obliterate differences of religion. Let the four Hindu castes

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1. The exact import of the term Khalsa provides an interesting study. Dr. Earnest Trumpp, the author of *Adi Granth* (1877) holds that it is an Arabic term meaning personal estate. The baptised Sikhs were the personal estate of the Guru. Cunningham writes that Khalsa or Khalisa is an Arabic derivation and has such original or secondary meaning as pure special five and Co. In the revenue records of the Sultans and the Mughals Khalsa denoted the land as directly held by crown as distinguished from the land held by the tributory Chiefs. The Khalsa either to denote the Kingdom of the Guru or that the Sikhs are pure chosen people. The Guru called his baptised Sikhs the Khalsa because they constituted the valued property of the Guru. They were not his paid soldiery but were a body of volunteers who were ever prepared to shed their blood for him.
2. The photostat copies appear in *'Hukamnamas'* ed. by Dr. Ganda Singh on serial Nos. 5 and 8.

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who have different rules for their guidance abandon them all, adopt the one form of adoration and become brothers. Let no one deem himself superior to another. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of one dish and feel no disgust or contempt for one another."[1] The Sikhs were to live a truthful life and would never allow his attention to be deviated from Immortal God. The Guru, in fact, recommended an unqualified worship of One True Lord, as it was set out by him in his Jap, Akal Ustat and other compositions. All beliefs, rituals or ceremonies that implied the recognition of anything but the one True Lord were categorically rejected as is evident from the following Swayya in which a direct reference is made to the Khalsa.[2]

"He who repeateth night and day the name of Him
Whose enduring light is unquenchable,
Who bestoweth not a thought on any but the One God
Who hath full love and confidence in God
Who putteth not faith even by mistake in
fasting, or worshipping cemeteries, places of
cremation, or Jogis' places of sepulture
Who only recognizeth the one God and not
pilgrimages, alms, the non-destruction of life,
Hindu penances or austerities;
And in whose heart the light of the Perfect
One shineth, he is recognised as a pure member
of the Khalsa".

SIGNIFICANCE

Caused a great stir

The creation of the new order of the Khalsa had manifold ramifications. It caused a great stir in the body-social of the Sikhs themselves. Some embraced the order of the Khalsa, others reacted despondently. Some of the Sikhs cautioned against accepting the innovations till written orders from the Guru were received. Some others remarked that the code was exteremely tough and also incompatible with our family traditions and customs. Many explained that the code was creation of the preceptors themselves. The situation led, at some place, to dissensions[3] among the Sikhs while at others it

1. The above address is based on the report of a news-writer sent to the Mughal court as it is vouched for by the Persian Historian Ghulam Mohi-ud-din (Teja Singh & Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 68).
2. For translation of the relevant portions of Guru Gobind Singh's compositions see the Sikh Religion vol. v, pp. 261-3, 306-10.
3. Refer to '*Gur Sobha*' quoted extensively in 'Banur Had order' by Ajit Singh Bagga on pp. 78-82.

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resulted in tension between the Sikhs and the non-Sikhs. Khatries and Brahmins, by and large, remained aloof. Some of them professed that they had faith in the religion of Guru Nanak and other Gurus; but many out of them refused to renounce the teachings of the Vedas and Shastras. They had been quite willing to pay lip service to the ideal of a casteless society; but they loathed to soil their lips with nectar from the same bowl and to commit themselves to the task of the new order with the result that many of them reverted to Brahmanism. Some remained just Sikhs better known as 'Sahjdhari', and very few of them entered the order of the Khalsa.

Leadership changed hands

This thing had important social repercussions. Hitherto, the leadership had remained in the hands of non-militant urban Khatris from whom majority of the masands were drawn; but now the position changed. Jats formed the bulk of the converts being large in number, took up the leadership from the Khatris with the result that "the rise of militant Sikhism became the rise of Jat power in the Punjab". The social status of the Jats who were technically low in the caste heirarchy also improved. To Koer Singh[1] the Khalsa became the movement of the hitherto neglected classes in the social organisation of the Hindus. The people belonging to scavenger class rejoiced[2] in this august body. The Guru also felt proud of them and called them as his sons (Rangretta Guru ka Beta). Jats in particular were conscious of this change in the complexion of the society.

Balanced Combination of the ideals of Bhakti and Shakti

Ideologically, the Khalsa aimed at a balanced combination of the ideals of Bhakti and Shakti or to express it in the modern terminology, the Khalsa was to be a brotherhood in faith and brotherhood in arms at one and the same time. The Guru's injunctions included that the Khalsa should bear arms, Kirpan, being one and the most important of them, that they should use double-edged sword in the preparation of the Amrit, and use of the appellation of Singh at the end of each name signified the martial valour, the Khalsa was expected to inculcate. Sword became an object of worship with the Sikhs, for it symbolised power and safety. The sentiment of the Sikhs for the sword was so much that God was given the name of 'All Steel' by the Guru. This being so, those who worshipped sword were pro-

1. Koer Singh understands that the rise of the Jat power was the direct result of the creation of the Khalsa. A close study of the Chapter IX of *Gur Bilas* makes it abundantly clear that the lower classes felt a sense of pride to join the new order and in a way, it found in it the augury of new era for themselves.

2. It was the magic touch that the most despised caste of scavengers, who now became Mazahabi Sikhs proved to be best fighters after institution. Jiwan Singh, a Mazahabi Sikh who fell fighting at Chamkaur was considered to be one of the best generals.

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mised exemptions from every other kind of religious rites or ceremonies and he was to be regarded as the Khalsa "who combats in the van, who mounts on the war horse, who is ever waging war and who is continuously armed."[1]

The Guru himself says:—

"I am the son of a brave man, not of a Brahmin
How can I perform austerities ?
How can I turn my attention to thee,
O Lord, forsake of domestic affairs ?
Now he pleased to grant me the boon
I crave with clasped hands
That when the end of my life cometh,
I may die fighting in a mighty battle."[2]

As is evident from the utterances of the Guru in connection with the Khalsa, the soldiery qualities were given place of eminence. In fact militarism was adopted as an article of faith. The Guru says:—

All steel, I am thy slave
Deeming me, thy own, preserve me;
Think of mine honour, whose arm thou has taken,
Deeming me thine own, cherish me
Single out and destroy mine enemies
May both my kitchen and my sword
prevail in the world.[3]

The Guru's primary concern was thus with his kitchen (Degh) and his sword (Tegh), the one as the emblem of service to assist the weak, the helpless and the oppressed and the other the emblem of power to extripate the tyrants, and the Khalsa was the instrument that he created to achieve his two-fold purpose.[4]

Transformation of the psyche of the people

All this, coupled with the new awareness of social egalitarianism had a miraculous effect on the psyche of the disciples of the Guru. Teja Singh[5] and Dr Ganda Singh have observed that, 'even those people who had been considered dregs of huma-

1. Cunningham : *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 375-6.
2. Macauliffe : *Sikh Religion*, vol v, p. 312.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
4. I. B. Bannerjee : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, p. 118.
5. Teja Singh & Ganda Singh : *A Short History of the Sikhs*.

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nity were changed, as if by magic into something rich and strange. The sweepers, the barbers, and confectioners who had not even touched a sword and whose whole generations had lived as grovelling slaves of the so-called higher classes became under the stimulating leadership of Guru Gobind Singh doughty warriors who never shrank from fear and who were ready to rush into the jaws of death at the bidding of the Guru'. According to Gourdon 'the dry bones of an oppressed peasentry were stirred into life, and the institution of the Sikh baptismal rite at the hands of a few disciples any where—in a place of worship, in a house or by the road side—brought about the more full and wide spread development of the new faith.' In this way, within a few months, a new people were born, bearded & beturbaned, fully armed and with a crusaders' zeal to build a new commonwealth. They implicitly believed that' the Khalsa shall rule, their enemies will be scattered, only they that seek refuge will be saved.'

Emergence of anew social pattern

From sociological point of view, the Khalsa represented a new pattern wherein tribal or caste affiliations had no room, nor were the superstitions, demeaning ceremonies and empty rituals given any accretion. On the other hand, it stood for broad outlook transcending parochial prejudices. Even the differences on the basis of religion were considered irrelevant or the creations either of the ignorance or of opaque understanding. Exactly this impression emerges when the Guru dins into the ears of his disciples that the four tribes of the Hindus, the Brahmins, Kashatryas, Vaishnavites and Sudras, would like beetleleaf, chuna (lime), Supari (beetle-nut) and Katha become all of one colour[1] when well-chewed. The Khalsa stood for righteousness, social equality, faith in Nirgun God, honest labour, and division of its fruit and repudiation of all types of exploitation. Evidently, this type of social pattern was more fit for arousing the dormant energies of the people and making them flow into the channel which fed the national stream of the country.

Growth of Nationalism

It was significant from another respect also, as, for instance, it generated among the people the longing for social freedom and ascendancy. Evidently, this pattern of society was more congenial for the dormant energies to awaken with the result that the new confidence and new aspirations began to articulate the people—obviously the precondition for progress. Moreover, as the accent of the programme of the Khalsa was to transcend the artificial barriers on the basis of caste, creed, race and region, the field was prepared for the sapling of nationalism to strike root.

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1. Malcolm Sir John : *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 45.

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Culmination of Sikh-Guru Relationship

Moreover, the Khalsa marked the culmination of the Sikh-Guru relationship. The Guru's regard for the Sikhs was an old thing but with a great difference. Guru Gobind Singh expressed his feelings about the Khalsa in one of the Hazare Shabads in which his appreciation for them is juxtaposed with his decision to do his best for them.[1]

"All the battles I have won against tyranny
I have fought with the devoted backing of these people
Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts
By their kindness, the store houses have been filled
I owe my education to them
By their kindness were the enemies killed
I owe my glorious existence to them
Otherwise ordinary men like me are found in millions
Service to them is pleasing to me
I do not enjoy serving any other people
Giving gifts to them is meritorious
Gifts to them prove fruitful in the next life
Praiseworthy is this, all other gifts are futile.
My wealth, my body, my soul, my head,
All that is in my house is dedicated to them."

The consideration of the Guru for his Khalsa should not be interpreted as a personal affair; it should be interpreted in terms of the mission of the Guru. Just as the Guru in his own eyes was the chosen instrument of God for restraining men from senseless acts[2] so his Khalsa were the willing agents for working out that mission. Thus the Khalsa was the team of mankind always at war for destroying the evil and protecting righteousness.

The completion of the evolution of Sikh Sangat

In addition to it, the Khalsa marked the completion of the evolution of the Sikh Sangat. In the beginning, Sangat was merely a religious gathering of devotees functioning more or less in isolation. Gradually, there occurred an increase in its functions and the isolation of one from another was lessened by the forging of common links, such as the preparation of scriptures, the building up of certain religious centres, institutions of Manjis and Masands as the agencies of the central leadership and assertion of the principle of the supremacy of the Guru. With the foundation of the Khalsa, the net-work of semi-integrated Sangats was fully integrated. The investing of the Khalsa with supreme powers later on marked the completion of the historical process long underway.

1. Grewal J.S. & Bal S.S. : *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 122.
2. S.S. Bal & J.S. Grewal : *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 124.

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Symbolized determination to complete the social and religious revolutions

Besides this, the Khalsa symbolized in itself the determination to complete the social and religious revolutions inaugurated by Guru Nanak. "The successors of Guru Nanak had guided these revolutions with great devotion and ability. Yet there were some lapses to be seen at the time of Guru Gobind Singh's accession. The creation of the Khalsa was not merely an endeavour to integrate the members of this community, it was also a powerful bid to carry to completion his predecessors' revolution in the field of social and religious life." The code of conduct prescribed for the newly created Khalsa was so devised as to impose a strict discipline on the Sikhs to ensure firm coherence and commitment on their part to the lofty ideals of Sikhism.

A few new doctrines

With the creation of the Khalsa, a few new doctrines were established. The first doctrine was the doctrine of the theocratic democracy by his selected, not elected, five representatives of the people from amongst thousands of devotees from all over the country while the second was the doctrine of collective responsibility by authorising the five beloved only in the presence of the holy Granth to assume authority implicitly to be obeyed by the whole community.

Khalsa, a great vehicle of revolution

Still from another point of view, the new order was significant. It marked the period of important beginnings. By the Guru's reforms, and under the impact of their dynamic and magnetic leadership, the Sikh community was not only strengthened but also converted into a great vehicle of revolution. Cunningham writes that 'the last apostle of the Sikhs effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty though fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak.' In the words of Narang "Though he (the Guru) did not break the shackles that bound his nation, he had set their souls free and filled their hearts with a lofty longing for freedom and ascendancy. He had broken the chain of make-believe sanctity attached to the lord of Delhi and destroyed the awe and terror inspired by Muslim tyranny." The Khalsa accepted the challenge of the powerful Mughal Empire and embarked upon a national struggle of liberation.

POST-KHALSA PERIOD

First Battle of Anandpur

The immediate effect of the creation of the Khalsa was to strike consternation among the hill chiefs who saw in the activities of the Guru a potent threat to their own religion and power.

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The Guru, as a matter of fact, wanted place for his new-born Khalsa to grow and to organise, but the Hill Chiefs found in the Guru's mission and reforms something fundamentally different of what they held. After the creation of the Khalsa, one of the first acts of the Guru was that the Sikhs be baptised according to new rites with the result that they, in a large number, began to come to Anandpur to pay their homage to the Guru. A crowd of the baptised Sikhs, surcharged with the egalitarian spirit and disengaged from orthodox way of living, always ready to combat the evil seriously alarmed the hill chiefs. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Guru's continued presence in their midst was considered a direct challenge to their feudal order and their orthodox ways of living.

Besides this, the Hill Chiefs and particularly Bhim Chand of Kahlur had very serious grievances against the Guru. The increasing number of the Sikhs who visited Anandpur created the problem of supplies. The Guru had no possessions besides Anandpur and its suburbs which he might call his own. and his main dependence was on the contributions of his followers. Since these rarely came in the shape of essential supplies, the followers of the Guru were constrained to raise them from the neighbouring villages who often opposed. This being so, at times, the Sikhs took supplies by force. The inimical attitude of Bhim Chand also added to the acuteness of the problem of the supplies with the result that the Sikhs resorted to plunder on certain occasions. Thus the acuteness of the problem of taking supplies which nccessitated the use of force so often soon created a state of affairs which the Hill Chiefs could, by no means, ignore.

Accordingly, a combination of the Hill Chiefs was formed, primarily at the instance of the Raja of Kahlur. A message was sent to the Guru that he should either vacate Anandpur or pay the rent thereof. The Guru refused to do either and addressed himself to making preparations. He, on his part, issued fiats to his followers to join him at Anandpur to participate in the impending war.[1] According to Dr. Bannerjee, many joined the ranks of the Guru. The Hill forces, instead of resorting to frontal attack, took to strategem. They laid siege to Anandpur (A.D. 1700) with a view to stopping all supplies and reinforcement in men to the Guru. But the Guru, well aware of their war tactics, at once ordered Ajit Singh to organise an attack on the Hill troops. The battle lasted for several days, and the hill chiefs became convinced that the victory was slipping off thier hands. In order to save their faces, they proposed to Guru on oath of a cow, that they would be friends with

1. Dr. I.B. Bannerjee : *Evolution of the Khalsa*, vol. II, p. 127.

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Guru leaves for Nirmoh and comparative peace

the Guru for all times to come, only if he left Anandpur for a while and came back later on. The Guru agreed to the proposal and the Guru left for Nirmoh, a village situated about a mile from Kiratpur and the first phase of the first battle of Anandpur ended for the time being.

During next two years that is to say, in 1701 & 1702, there was comparative peace but the trace could not change iteself into lasting peace. The villagers, obviously sensing the mood of the Government, went on creating the troubles for the Guru. As a result, there were skirmishes here and there and in one of them, Sahib Chand, the hero of the battle of Bhangani, was killed. The frequency of skirmishes created atmosphere of tension, suspicion and distrust. Moreover, during the period, the Khalsa increased in strength manifold which made the hill rajas all the more panicky. The situation appeared hopeless to them. "When such news spread far and wide then the Rajas did feel in their hearts we have but ruled in vain, for Satguru's writ is respected everywhere." (Gur Sobha). The Kahlur chief decided to square up the issue once for all. He decided to get the aid from his suzerain, the Mughal Government, and sent an envoy for the purpose. It is not clear whether this appeal was made to Aurangzeb in the South or to Muazzam at Kabul or the Mughal Emperor at Delhi whether directly or through the Faujdar of Sirhind. In any case Mughal contingents arrived in due course at Sirhind to collaborate with its Faujdar who had been instructed to aid the vassal chief of Bilaspur against the Guru of Nanak Panthies.

Both the armies combined themselves at Sirhind and then moved on to achieve the task.

Battle of Nirmoh

The Guru already abreast of the developments also made preparations to meet the attack of the allied forces on Nirmoh. In the beginning of 1702, we find him urging the Khalsa in the villages of the Punjab to go to Anandpur fully armed. Apart from retaining some of the Khalsa who would normally come to have his glimpse (darshan), he had invited daring men from several towns and villages, given them arms and enlisted them as his soldiers. The Guru's strategy was defensive but that of enemy was offensive. The allied armies attacked Nirmoh from one side while Bhim Chand made attack from the other. Their object was obviously to weaken the defence of the Guru. The Gujjars, probably of neighbouring villages who had suffered at the hands of the Khalsa joined hands with the invaders. The number of the allied forces was much larger than that of the Khalsa. In Sainapat's simile, the enemy surrounded Nirmoh as the stars around the moon. The contest lasted for about twenty four hours before the Khalsa could get respite from the enemy's vigorous attack. Ultimately Guru Gobind Singh was constrained to evacuate Nirmoh, probably because of the use of

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The Guru in the territory of friendly chief of Jaswan

cannon of the Mughal faujdar and led his Khalsa across the river Sutlej into friendly territory. But before they could cross the river, they were overtaken by the allies who were naturally keen to obstruct the passage. The Khalsa fought desperately for three to four hours and succeeded eventually in crossing the river into the territories of the Chief of Jaswan who was an old ally of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru and his Khalsa went to the town of Basoli to the north of the river Sutlej.

After this, the Mughal troops returned to Sirhind with doubtful satisfaction of having achieved at a great cost the limited objective of expelling the Khalsa from the territories of Kahlur on the eastern side of the Sutlej.

Bhim Chand's attack on Guru—Battle of Basoli

But Bhim Chand who was elated with partial success considered himself strong enough to pursue the Guru single-handed. He led an attack against the Guru but the Khalsa at Basoli were strong enough to repel the troops of Kahlur. Bhim Chand's men fled from the battlefield as the arrow flies from a stretched bow.

The Guru takes initiative

After this battle, known as the battle of Basoli, the Guru took initiative against Bhim Chand leading incursions into his territory on the north of the river Sutlej. He gradually moved towards Anandpur. At this time the Gujjars and Rangars of the village Kalmot attacked a party of the Sikhs who had gone on hunting expedition. The Guru, on being informed, ordered the Khalsa to teach them a lesson with the result that a bloody contest followed. The villagers were no match for the Guru's followers and they were soon compelled to eat an humble pie. The fortress of Kalmot was occupied by this time, and he with some Hill Chiefs, approached the Guru with the proposal for peace and the agreement was reached and the hostilities were called off.

Kalmot occupied by the Sikhs

The Guru was attacked at Chamkaur

Some time after, the Guru returned to Anandpur and therefrom went on a visit to Kurukshetra. While returning from there, he was suddenly attacked at Chamkaur.[1] The attack, however, proved ineffective as the commander of the invading Mughal force was so much impressed by the Charismatic personality of the Guru that he gave up the very idea of attack.

Renewal of the hostilities

Two years and some days passed in this manner when again the old hostilities reappeared. The reasons were the same viz., the increasing prestige of the Guru, and the clashes as a result of the refusal to offer supplies to the Sikhs.

1. The account is not present in Gur Bilas and Gur Sobha. It is available in Suraj Parkash. It seems to be correct because it is well-entrenched in Sikh tradition.

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Second Battle of Anandpur

Some Hill chiefs who could not tolerate the presence of the Khalsa at Anandpur arranged a formidable combination against the Guru and proceeded to attack Anandpur. They were welcomed by the cannon shot from the fort of Anandgarh. They decided to lay siege to the town instead of suffering heavy losses in an attempt to capture it by a direct assault. In that strategem also, they were foiled. They could not achieve any success against the sorties of the Khalsa horsemen whose shrewd tactics sufficiently harassed them. Consequently, the Hill Chiefs were left with the immediate alternative of retreat. Notwithstanding this, the Hill Rajas were determined to oust the Guru from the territory. They made preparations on a large scale. The Gujjars and Rangars who bore grudge with the Guru were incited to join the war against the Sikhs. They harnessed their own sources with care and assiduity; they applied to the Mughal authorities[1] and got the assistance of the troops from Sirhind and Lahore. The allies soon fell on Anandpur; but the Khalsa soldiers proved to be superior to them and the allies were driven out of Anandpur. Then the allies encircled the Sikhs on all sides and the great siege of Anandpur began.

Gujjar and Rangars, participation

Troops from Lahore and Sirhind also take part

The siege was planned in such a manner that all ingress and egress for both goods and persons were completely stopped. All supplies being cut off, the Sikhs were put to great hardships by hunger and thirst. Food position became extremely serious and the Sikhs were driven to undertake some dangerous expedients in order to relieve it. The Sikhs sallied out to snatch provisions from the besiegers, but they met only a partial success, and that too for some time after which the allies collected their stores at one place and guarded it night and day. The Sikhs resorted to direct assaults on the allies but they were worsted by the besiegers.

Sikhs in Distress

Having suffered extreme hardships, the Sikhs besought the Guru to evacuate the fort, but the Guru counselled them patience for some time more. The Sikhs insisted and there were signs of discontent. The Guru asked them to declare themsalves. Forty of them signed a disclaimer (ਬੇਦਾਵਾ) and were allowed to go away.

Allies gave pledge for safe passage

When the enemy learnt of the distress in which the Sikhs and the Guru were placed at that time, they planned a different strategy to take advantage of the situation. They sent a message to the Guru suggesting that if he decided to abandon Anandpur, he would be allowed a safe passage. Their pledge of a safe passage was unreliable, since they planned to draw out

1. We are not sure whether direct representation was made, but it is fairly certain that the Emperor had sent orders to the Mughal officials notably to Wazir Khan, the faujdar of Sirhind, *Mirza Muhammad Harisi Ibratnama*; S.H.R. 231.

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Forty disclaimed the Guru

the Sikhs from within the shelter of the township and attack them. The Guru sensed their secret motive when he received the message, and therefore did not accept the seggestion. But some of the Masands and the Sikhs who were under their influence insisted that the suggestion of the enemy be accepted and the township be abandoned. Forty of them were so vehement in their demand that they disclaimed Guru Gobind Singh as their Guru. Even then, when they found the Guru was not agreeable, they prevailed upon Mata Gujri to support their view-point. The Guru then thought out scheme to expose the hypocricy of the enemy, as also to convince his followers of their folly.

Enemy's hypocricy and deceit exposed

Immediately after this, the Guru ordered a number of bullocks to be laden with rubbish articles. When all preparations were complete, he informed the message-bearers of the enemy that he had accepted their proposal. They were told that the Guru's treasure would leave the township first and that would be followed after a time by him and his people. The enemy received this information with great joy. At the appointed hour of the night, the Guru called for the loaded bullocks, tied lighted torches to their horns and sent them out at midnight along with some Sikhs to accompany them. When the enemy saw the train bearing the treasure emerging from the township, they forgot all their pledges and fell upon the small company of the Sikhs to loot the treasure. But their disappointment was great when they found that the treasure was made up of tattered clothes and rubbish articles. After exposing the folly of the enemy, the Guru according to Koer Singh, addressed his Sikhs on the following words:

> Never true to their words are these
> Hill Rajas, you know not their deceptions
> They are all big cheats unworthy of trust.
> (Koer Singh in 'Gurbilas')

Letter of Aurangzeb to the Guru

After some time the enemy delivered a letter to the Guru. This letter bearing the seal of Emperor Aurangzeb[1] contained many assurances for the safe passage of the Sikhs out of Anandpur Sahib. The followers of the Guru who were already anxious to leave the township became very vocal and active. They approached Mata Gujri and pleaded with her. The Guru, however, felt that their pleadings were not reasonable and it was not appropriate to accept the terms of the enemy and leave the fort. But, finally he agreed to accept the enemy's

1. Koer Singh, Gur Bilas.

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Evacuation of Anandpur

word and directed the preparations to be made to abandon the fort. Anandpur was finally evacuated on 5/6 December, A.D. 1705 (6-7 Poh Samvat 1762 BK.).

Pledges broken

The moment the enemy got an inkling of the departure of the Sikhs, they forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit immediately. Skirmishes commenced from Kiratpur onwards. Realizing the impending danger, Guru Gobind Singh gave a band of 50 men to Bhai Udai Singh and charged him with the responsibility of checking the enemy's advancement. Bhai Udai Singh fought at Shahi Tibbi a bloody battle with the enemy with a handful of his men; all of them perished fighting, covering themselves with imperishable glory.

Battle of Shahi Tibbi

Jiwan Singh to hold the enemy

When the battle of Shahi Tibbi was in progress, the rest of the caravan including Guru Gobind Singh had reached the bank of the Sarsa river. It was now almost the daybreak. About this time the news arrived that a contingent of enemy troops was fast approaching. Bhai Jiwan Singh[1], a prominent Rangreta Sikh, was given a band of 100 warriors and ordered to encounter the pursuers. With the rest of his people the Guru plunged into the flooded waters of the Sarsa. The flood was so fast that many of them were drowned and many more scattered, including members of Guru Gobind Singh's own family. Besides, there was a heavy loss of valuable literature and property. It was from here that the Guru's revered mother, Mata Gujri and his two younger sons, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, got separated and proceeded to Saheri the village of their domestic servant Gangu Brahmin who handed them over to the police at Morinda to be carried to Sirhind. As regards the Guru himself, he was able to reach, accompanied by his two elder sons and a small number of veteran Sikhs, the village Ghanaula on the other side of the Sarsa. It was now planned to proceed further to Kotla Nihang Khan and pass the day safely in the residance of the Pathan Zamindar Nihang Khan who, being an old and sincere devotee of the Sikh Gurus, could be depended upon for help even in a critical situation such as this. Apprehending that the route ahead might be beset with danger, the Guru set apart a band of about 100 veterans under the command of Bhai Bachittar Singh and instructed them to march by the direct route whereas he along with some of his prominent people preferred to take the longer path along the left bank of the Sutlej river. The Guru met no resistance on the way and reached Kotla Nihang Khan quite safe and sound. Bachittar Singh and his men, however, had to fight their way through a cordon of the Rangars of Malikpur, a village on the way, and Pathans of Ropar. In the fierce fighting

Loss of valuable literature and property

Kotla Nahang

1. Bhai Jaita's name after baptism.

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Fight against the Pathans and Rangars

that took place on this occasion, majority of the Sikhs fell dead. The leader, Bachittar Singh, was mortally wounded and in that serious condition was carried to Kotla Nihang Khan by Sahibzada Ajit Singh, the eldest son of Guru Gobind Singh.

The Guru did not want to stay at Kotla a minute longer than was absolutely necessary. He decided to proceed further on the same day. His elder sons, Sahibzadas Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh, and 40 devotees were to accompany him. When the night fell, the whole band set out on the onward journey. Nihang Khan detailed his son, Alam Khan, to guide them as to the route they were to follow.

When Guru Gobind Singh left Kotla Nihang Khan, his object, it seems, was to proceed to Machhiwara and Rai Kot. At the former place lived two Pathan brothers, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan. They had many personal trade deals with the Guru and in consequence had come to be charmed by his powerful personality. Moreover, they happened to be cousins of Nihang Khan and as such could be depended upon. The second place, Rai Kot, was under the control of Rai Kalla, whose daughter had been married to Alam Khan, the son of Nihang Khan. Besides, like Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan of Machhiwara Rai Kalla also had independently become a devotee of Guru Gobind Singh. Another reason for the Guru to select this route was that the 6th, 7th and 9th Gurus had widely travelled across this area and converted a good number of local people to the Sikh Faith.

After Kotla Nihang the village, Bur Majra happened to be the halting place of Guru Gobind Singh and his men. Soon after their arrival there, the news was received that a large body of Sirhind troops was chasing them. Immediately, the Guru decided to face the enemy from within the Garhi of Chamkaur and hurried towards it. He was well aware of the importance of this *garhi* as he had, on a previous occasion, fought a military engagemant at this place.

Battle of Chamkaur

The zamindar of the place invited the Guru to come inside the village and offered his mud Haveli (mud fortress) to the Guru for his abode and other purposes. Soon after, the army of the allies closed upon the place. The Guru had only forty men[1] with him, an infinitisimally small number in comparison with the huge host that had encompassed it. His weapons of defence and offence were those which he and his men had managed to bring with the flight. His provisions consisted of the

1. Refer to *Zafarnama*, the letter addressed to the Emperor Aurangzeb.

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little that he could manage to procure during interval between his arrival and the arrival of the Imperial armies. It was under such conditions that the siege of Chamkaur started. The faithful little band of forty, with only mud walls to protect them, fought against thousands to the last. The two eldest sons Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh and three of the beloved ones were killed. Only five Sikhs were left to defend the place. They persuaded the Guru to leave the place. The Guru had to agree to the persuasions as he himself had promised at the time of the creation of the Khalsa, that the authority of the Five Beloved was higher than even that of the Guru. Accordingly, the Guru slipped out from Chamkaur through the ranks of the enemy. According to Gur Bilas[1] Sant Singh who resembled the Guru put on the dress which resembled that of the Guru. The enemy was duped and they concentrated their attention on Sant Singh, thus providing opportunity to the Guru and his three prominent Sikhs—Daya Singh, Man Singh and Dharam Singh to step out of the Garhi and wend their way completely outwitting the enemy. Since it was not possible for all of them to travel together, so each went his own way.

Machhiwara

When the Guru reached Jandsar, a local Gujjar identified him and raised a cry but to no effect. The Guru moved on and reached the village Behlolpur at a distance of three *Kos* to the west. From there he reached the thorny wilds of Machhiwara. For days he had nothing to eat but tender leaves of the Akk plant and had nothing but only a clod of earth to rest upon. While he was asleep, three of his devotees Dharam Singh, Man Singh, and Daya Singh came up and rejoined him. But the situation was grave because the enemy was in hot pursuit of the Guru. Realizing this, one Golaba, an old masand of Machhiwara took the Guru and his three Sikhs to his residence but soon the heart within him failed. At this juncture, two Pathan horse-merchants Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, who were old acquaintances of the Guru, chose to risk their lives. With their help, the Guru disguised himself as a Muslim Faqir while his three Sikhs, masqueraded themselves as his attendants. The Guru was then seated on a litter and taken out. They informed all the inquirers that they were escorting '*Uch-da-Pir*'[2] or a high saint, which by a pun would also mean the holy saint of Uch (a sacred place near Multan). At the village Lal, a military officer had some doubts and made searching inquiries. Finding the answers not very satisfactory, the commander sent for Qazi Pir Mohammad, once the Persian tutor of the Guru and asked him to identify the occupant of the litter. The Qazi gave

Gani Khan & Nabi Khan

Uch-da-Pir

1. *Gur Bilas*, xxi.
2. 'Uch-da-Pir' meant priests of Uch, a town in the south western Punjab. The expression also meant high priest.

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helpful reply and in this way, the situation was saved. From Lal the Guru visited Katana and then Kanech where the masand named Fateh did not let him stay. Then he reached Alam Gir Via Doraha. Here one Nand Lal Zamindar presented a horse to the Guru, therby enabling him to change cot for the horse. The Guru also cast off the robes of 'Uch da Pir'. The situation was now easier and the Guru asked Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan to return home. The families of these Muslim friends, including that of Pir Mohammad were honoured with *Hukam Namas* (letters of authority).

Alam Gir

Muslim friends honoured

From Alam Gir, the Guru advanced on horseback in the direction of Rai Kot. At Silaoni the Chief of Rai Kot, Rai Kalla who was the Guru's devotee and a close relative of Nihang Khan waited upon him and took him to Rai Kot. At the Guru's behest, he sent Nura Mahi to Sirhind to fetch news about what had happened to the other members of the family. Not long after, the news of the tragedy enacted at Sirhind was delivered to him here. He remained as composed as ever. He resumed his march to Hehar where he stayed for two days as the guest of Mehant Kirpal Das, a hero of the battle of Bhangani (1688). The next stage in his journey was Lamma Jatpura. It was here that Rai Kalla of Rai Kot, who had been accompanying him all the time took leave. The messenger Nura Mahi had hinted that there was a rumour at Sirhind that Nawab Wazir Khan would soon send a force in search of Guru Gobind Singh. Realising that the territory around Rai Kot was not a suitable place for meeting the enemy's challenge, the Guru directed his Sikhs towards the Jungle Desh, the land of Barars. On the way, he passed through the villages of Manuke, Mehdiana Chakkar, Takhtupur and Madhen and reached Dina.

News regarding the proposed march of Wazir Khan of Sirhind

At Dina, about 7 Kos south-west of Takhat Pura, a devoted Sikh Rama presented the Guru with an excellent horse. The Guru accepted it for himself and gave his former horse to Bhai Daya Singh. The Guru's arrival here soon became known to the Zamindars of the area, and they began to rally round him. Some of the influential people who met him here, were Lakhmir and Samir, grandsons of Jodha Rai, who had met Guru Hargobind and became his devotee and Param Singh and Dharam Singh grandsons of Bhai Rup Chand. The Guru stayed here for some days. He, about this time, wished to settle the matter diplomatically, and wrote *Zafarnama*, a letter in Persian verse addressed to the Emperor making a bold protest against the attitude of local government officials. This letter was taken to the Emperor by Bhai Daya Singh and Dharam Singh. The letter was in fact a reply to the letter already sent by the Emperor.

Zamindars & people rallied round the Guru

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From Dina, the Guru occasionally went out and visited a few places of the neighbourhood. Two such places were Manan and Bhadaur.

The Mughals came to know of Guru's whereabouts

While yet at Dina the Guru came to learn that his whereabouts had become known to the Mughal Government of Sirhind. From now onwards he was most anxious to find out some suitable place where he could best meet the challenge of the enemy; no less was his keenness to inculcate in the minds of the people the spirit of 'Dharam Yudh', war of righteousness.

The Guru's search for the place to face the Mughals

So he left Dina and visited many places such as Bander, Bargarh, Baihbal, Saravan. At Saravan the Guru gave his people a little practice in arrow-shooting, Next, he proceeded to Jaito. Therefrom the Guru went to Kotla Maluk Das and Lambhawali wherefrom he made a dash to Kot Kapura situated 13 Kos in the north. Probably, the pursuing enemy force had come too near by now. Chaudhri Kapura, a Brar Jat, was asked to lend the use of his fort to him for a few days.

Kapura's refusal to give his fort

But fearing the wrath of the Mughals, he refused to oblige the Guru. From here the Guru proceeded to Dhilwan Sodhian, 3 Kos from Kot Kapura where a relative of Guru Gobind Singh received him with great warmth and cordiality. It was here, as the tradition goes, the Guru took off his blue robes which he had been wearing ever since he left Machhiwara and tearing them off into small pieces consigned them, one by one, to fire. The historic words that he is said to have uttered on this occasion are memorable :

Blue robes taken off

The blue robes have been torn off,
And with that ends the rule of Turko-Pathans.

Chaudhari Kapura forgiven

Chaudhari Kapura, now repentent of his earlier disgraceful act, came to see the Guru and asked for his forgiveness. The Guru forgave him and he provided the Guru with a good guide, Chaudhari Khana, under whose guidance the Guru marched westward in the direction of Dhab Khidrana. On the way, he passed through Ramina, Mallan, Gauri, Sanghar and Kaoni.

Meanwhile a large number of the followers had collected around the Guru who now was not as helpless as he had been at Chamkaur.[1] But the number certainly did not swell to twelve

1. Some Sikh scholars are of the opinion that the Guru had only 40 disciples in this battle. The statement is wrong because as they themselves put it, that thousands of enemy soldiers were killed—the task which only forty soldiers could not accomplish.

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Battle of Muktsar Dec. 1705

thousand as Muhammed Latif would have us believe.[1] *The tank of Khidrana being dry, the Sikh soldiers entrenched themselves in a forest in the neighbourhood of Khidrana and awaited the advance of the troops af Wazir Khan.* Contending forces clashed with each other on 29th December, 1705. The brunt of the attack was borne by the forty men of Majha who had deserted the Guru's ranks during the siege of Anandpur but taunted by their own women who would not let them enter their homes, they had come back to reinforce the Guru's small army. These were all over-powered but not before they had shown their mettle as the toughest fighters whom the experienced Mughal faujdar has ever known in his life. The Muhammedans were soon in great straits for want of water and Wazir Khan decided to return without striking a blow on the main body of the Khalsa with Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru, thus, obtained a great victory for himself.

Forty Muktas

When the Guru, at the close of the battle, came to know of the sacrifices of the Sikhs of Majha, he was deeply moved. He took out the paper on which they had written their disclaimer and tore it up, as a sign of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Guru embraced each one of them, as they lay dead or were dying and called them 'Emancipated ones'. They are still remembered in the daily prayer of the Sikhs as forty *Muktas.*

Brars' indecent behaviour

From Muktsar, the Guru moved to Rupana, Bhander, Gurusar and Thehri Bambiha and Rohila and Jangiana and Bhai Ka Kot which had been founded by Bhai Bhagtu. From there, he moved on to Sahib Chand and further on to Chatiana where Brars who had fought for him demanded the arrears of their pay under threat of blocking his onward march. But by God's grace, it so happened that a devoted Sikh from the neighbouring area brought enough money about the same time which enabled the Guru to pay off all the arrears. The leader of the Brars Chaudhari Dana was extremely sorry for the insolent behaviour of his people and refused to get any payment for himself.

His act of self-abnegation greatly impressed Guru Gobind Singh who, on his request, immediately agreed to visit his native place Mehma Swai. The journey lay through Ablu, a place founded by an uncle of Chaudhari Dana. Reaching Mehma Swai, the Guru encamped at the place now called Lakhisar and from there made a visit to Dana's home and several other places around. After a few days at Lakhisar,

1. Mohd. Latif : *History of the Punjab*, p. 266.

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At Damdama

Guru Gobind Singh decided to go to Talwandi Sabo at the request of Chaudhari Dalla. He took the same old route and once again passing through Chatiana, Kot Sahib Chand and Kot Bhai arrived at Giddarbaha and then paying short visit to Rohilla, Jangirana, Bambiha, Bajak, Kaljhirani, Jassi Bagwali, Pakka Kalan and Chak Hira Singh reached Talwandi Sabo, now called Damdama Sahib or Takhat Damdama Sahib. The place appealed to the Guru so much that he assumed a permanent residence there. His stay at this place lasted for 9 months and 9 days.

Activities at Damdama

Conversion of the people to Sikh faith

The period at Damdama was put to best possible use by the Guru. He utilised the time in laying abiding foundations of Sikhism in the Malwa Tract.[1] Many old and hereditary Sikhs were given *Pahul* and brought more thoroughly into the Khalsa. Dalla, the Chief of the Talwandi, Tiloka, the ancestor of the Nabha State and Rama, the ancestor of Patiala State were outstanding examples. Besides, new converts were also made in large numbers.

According to Dr Fauja Singh "Talwandi Saboke attracted large crowds from far and near and presented the spectacle of a new Anandpur. The Sikhs, devotees and others who came to assemble here have heen estimated at more than ten times the number of the people at Anandpur. The Guru made a number of trips to important places nearby. In one trip he visited Bhagi Bhander, 3 Kos north of Talwandi Sabo, Kot Samir, 3 Kos further north and Chak Bhai Ka, about 10 Kos from Talwandi Sabo to the north. At the last-named place, the Guru was given a warm reception by Bhai Rai Singh, grandson of Bhai Bhagtu. On another occasion, he went to Bhatinda City and stayed there for seven days. While coming back to Talwandi, the Guru visited Mahima and Bhakri both of them situated to the north of Bhatinda. On some other occasion, he visited Tala Pind about 10 Kos to the south. At Kewal Chaudhries Rama and Tiloka waited upon him and got his blessings.

Moreover, it was here that the Guru brought about a new recension of the Adi Granth.[2] Besides this, a part, at least, of

1. He (the Guru) remained peaceful and only went on making disciples in which he is said to have been very successful. He built there a large residence for himself. (Adi Granth, by Trumpp xcii)
   Payne : *A Short History of Sikhs*, pp. 41-2.

2. The new volume containing the whole of original Guru Granth Sahib, the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur and his own Slokas is known as 'Damdama Sahib di Bir'. This Bir was installed at Harimandir but it is not available to us now. It has either been destroyed or taken away by Ahmad Shah Abdali when he plundered the town during one of his raids.

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the Guru's own works was composed at Damdama. The order of the Nirmala Sikhs was also created here with a view of giving the Sikhs a band of the Sikhs exclusively devoted to the study and preaching of the Sikh faith. Quite a large number of scholars who wanted to lead a life of independence also took shelter in the court of the Guru. Possibly, it was because of all these things that Damdama soon acquired the fame of Banaras, the ancient educational centre of India.

Literary Activities

Order of Nirmalas

Guru ki Kashi

The Guru also re-organised his forces. According to Dr. Bannerjee the Guru's strength seems to have increased to some extent, as besides regular followers, he had also taken some Dogras and Brars into his service.[1]

The above-stated facts testify that the Guru during his sojourn was as active as ever and we can legitimately accredit to the Guru some very solid achievements at Damdama.

Causes of the success of the Guru in the area of Damdama

The tremendous success of the Guru in this area despite heavy odds was due to several causes. Among them the greatest importance may be attached to the Guru's decision to leave the hills and to come into the interior of the area which was the real base of his strength. Anandpur, notwithstanding its strong fortifications, suffered from inherent weakness, for the population around, consisting mostly of the conservative and caste-ridden Rajputs, who were hostile to the Sikhs and day in and day out caused harassments, even impediments, to them. On the other hand when the Guru entered the Punjab plains, the people around were helpful and co-operative and were willing to rally under the banner of the Guru, should the call come from him. This made all the difference. Closely allied to that was the second factor, the impact left by the previous Gurus on the people of these areas. The 6th, 7th and 9th Gurus had, one after the other, conducted extensive tours across this area and left a deep imprint on the minds of the people. Guru Gobind Singh was at pains to select his route of march through the areas which had already been visited by his predecessors. For instance, the places, of Bur Majra, Ghulal, Lall Kalan, Katana, Bassian, Chakkar, Takhtupura, Patto Hira Singh, Bhagta Bhaika, and Lambhawali, through which Guru Gobind Singh passed, had all been sanctified by Sikh Gurus previously. The third important factor was the valuable support provided by some of the influential Zamindars of the areas traversed. Prominent among them were Nihang Khan, Rai Kall, Chaudhuri Kapura, Chaudhuri Dana, Chaudhri

1. Koer Singh: *Gur Bilas Patshahi 10.*
"Everyday would the Guru distribute gold and silver coins
Countless soldiers were thus attracted to the place."

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Dalla, Chaudhuri Rama and and Chaudhuri Taloka. At that time the Mughal Empire was facing a serious agrarian crisis as a result of which zamindars were asserting themselves. Their increasing strength was a great helping asset for Guru Gobind Singh. The next important factor was the terrain of the Jungle Desh. With its scarcity of water, difficulty of routes and vast wildernesses, the Lakhi Jungle, as it was called, presented formidable obstacles to any invading army from outside. Last but not least was the Guru's charismatic personality which could turn adversity into fortune and discomfiture into triumph. But for his powerful and towering personality, even the best of circumstances would have yielded no fruit.

Guru proceeds to the South to see Aurangzeb

It was on October 30, 1706 that the Guru decided to proceed towards the South to see Aurangzeb in response to the Emperor's invitation which he sent having received the letter entitled *Zafarnama*. The Guru's resolve to see the Mughal Emperor has been generally but wrongly interpreted in terms of an unqualified submission to the Mughal Government. The Guru's purpose in seeing the Emperor was to impress upon him the justness of his own cause.

Imperial messengers to convey Emperor's wish to see him

It was here that Guru Gobind Singh received the imperial messengers who had come to convey to him the Emperor's wish for a personal meeting. Guru Gobind Singh's letter entitled 'Zafarnama' appears to have produced the desired effect. In the Ahkam-i-Alamgiri, the receipt of a letter from Guru Gobind Singh is acknowledged by the Emperor and the orders which he issued to Munim Khan at Lahore to conciliate Guru Gobind Singh and also to make satisfactory arrangements for his travel towards the south may also be seen in the *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*. That Aurangzeb was anxious to meet Guru Gobind Singh is evident from the Ahkam though it is not clear why. Perhaps the Emperor wished to secure peace in the Punjab so that he might concentrate on his schemes to bring the Marathas to their knees.

Emperor's direction to Munim Khan

Before starting on his onward journey, the Guru deviated to Khural 35 miles away from Sirsa to help Gulab Singh who was being harassed by the Muslim population of that place. After that he set out in the direction of Rajasthan en route to Ahmednagar where the Emperor was encamped. On the way, he passed through Haripur Bud Tirath Madhu Singhana and Nohar wherefrom he proceeded to Bhadra. Then he moved to Sahewa, reputed from the strange phenomenon of a Peepal tree growing out of a Jand tree. Therefrom he reached Naraina where there was the principal Dera of Dadu Panthis.

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At Naraina meeting with Jaitmal

The Guru paid a visit to the Dera and held a discussion with Mahant Jait Ram. The inmates of Dera accorded a warm reception to the Guru; but they were wonderstruck at the regal manners of the Guru. From this place the Guru moved to Kalot. It was here that Bhai Daya Singh came up from the south and joined him. From Kalot, he proceeded to Pushkar near Ajmer. Ultimately he reached Baghoru in the state of Udaipur. It was situated on the left bank of Kothari river. Here the local people attempted to bar the entry of the Guru into the town which led to a slight skirmish in which the people were defeated. At Bughor the news reached that Aurangzeb had expired and war of succession had broken out among his sons. There was no point now in proceeding further.

Daya Singh joins the Guru

Death of Aurangzeb

Moral support to Prince Muazzam

He continued to stay there for quite some time. When he heard about Prince Muazzam's march towards Delhi and Agra, he atonce decided to give him his blessings. First he sent Dharam Singh and a few other devoted Sikhs to see the Prince and assure him on his behalf of his moral support; and a little afterwards, he himself set out by easy stages for Delhi. By the time he reached Delhi, Muazzam had advanced to Agra. Guru Gobind Singh's keenness to meet Bahadur Shah is understandable. Aurangzeb's death had left his purpose unsolved and after the issue of war had been decided he could meet Bahadur Shah for the same purpose for which he had set out to meet Aurangzeb in the south.

The Guru was honoured by Bahadur Shah

After hearing about Muazzam's victory at the battle of Jajau, the Guru left Delhi for Agra. There he was received by Muazzam who had now proclaimed himself the Emperor of India. A royal robe of honour was conferred upon the Guru on 24th, 1707.[1] ? July

Guru accompanies Bahadur Shah to Rajasthan and Deccan

The Guru had come for talks with the Emperor. These talks were still inconclusive when the Emperor left for Rajasthan with a view to suppressing the revolts that some discontended Rajput Chiefs had raised. The Guru accompanied him. By now the news had reached Bahadur Shah that his younger brother Kam Bakhsh in the Deccan had proclaimed himself the Emperor of India. To put down that rebellion, the Emperor proceeded towards Deccan via Chittorgarh.

At Burhanpur

From Chittorgarh, Bahadur Shah left for Burhanpur and the Guru accompanied him enroute to Hyderabad. The Guru stayed for many days at Burhanpur and met Jogi Jiwan Das.

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1. Entry in the *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (Jaipur) dated 24th July, 1707. *Guru Sobha.*

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The Guru parted company with the Emperor

He also met Mahant Jait Ram of Dadoo Dawara who, per chance, was there. Jogi Jiwan Das and the Mahant told the Guru about one Bairagi Madho Das and his great occult powers. The Guru decided to meet him. At the same time, the Guru became weary of Bahadur Shah who, instead of deciding something against Wazir Khan and other officials, was evasive in his replies. Accordingly, the Guru parted company with the Emperor at Hingoli and moved on to Nander where he reached in the beginning of September or towards the end of August, 1708.

The Guru's stay at Nander

The Guru decided to stay here, selected for his residence, a congenial spot overlooking the river. Why did he select this place in particular ? The reason hitherto known is that he wanted to see Banda; but there was another reason also. The city of Nander at that time had eight Ashrams of different religious sects: Vaishnavites, Shaivites Lingayats, Bairagis etc. The Guru considered it in the fitness of things to enter into a dialogue with the leaders of the holy camps to convert them to his own viewpoint. It was perhaps because of this that he started addressing congregations without much loss of time. Guru Gobind Singh's missionary activities among the inhabitants of Nander led to an armed fight between the Khalsa and the followers of a Bairagi, later to be known as Banda. The followers of Banda were worsted in the encounter, and his own encounter with Guru Gobind Singh resulted in Banda's conversion to Sikhism who accepted the *pahul* and the *rehat* of the Khalsa.[1]

All kinds of people started coming to the congregations of the Khalsa at Nander. Soon an Afghan named Jamshed Khan started coming to the assemblies which were addressed by Guru Gobind Singh. Apparently, he came to attend the congregation but in fact he was looking for an opportunity to assassinate the Guru.[2] On the third or fourth day, he found the opportunity and as Guru Gobind Singh retired to his personal apartment after evening prayer, Jamshed Khan entered the apartment and, through deceit, wounded him with a dagger. The Guru put him to death immediately, but the wound he received was very serious.

When the Emperor was informed of the unfortunate incident, he sent one of the royal surgeons to dress Guru's

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1. J. S. Grewal and S.S. Bal : *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 154.
2. Sainapat : *Gur Sobha*.

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wounds but even he could not cure it. On the 18th October, 1708 Guru Gobind Singh resigned his life at the age of forty-two and was cremated at Nander.

THE GURU'S MOTIVES IN GOING TO THE DECCAN

The Guru's motives in going to the Deccan alongwith Bahadur Shah variously stated by different writers are as under :—

(1) Bute Shah and Malcolm say that he went to Deccan because he despaired at the terrible reverses and bereavement which had been his lot and wanted a change.

(2) Some writers say that the Guru joined the Mughal service. Cunningham says that the Guru received a military command in the valley of Godavari.

(3) Quite a few writers state that the Guru having found that it would be difficult to gather afresh an army strong enough to challenge and rout the Imperial forces decided to arouse the Rajputs and the Maharattas to fight against the Mughal tyranny.

Before arriving at some definite conclusion we will have to examine all the theories stated above. The view of Bute Shah and Malcolm that dejection overwhelmed the Guru and he. in order to have a change, left for the South, is evidently unfounded, as it does not fit in with the Guru's behaviour in the face of severest losses. Indeed, his whole life is a lesson in fortitude, courage and high spirits. As a child of nine years, he lost his father and stood face to face with formidable Mughal Empire as its zenith; but that thing failed to have any depressing effect on his tiny yet mighty heart. He saw his dearest Sikhs killed before his eyes, sent his two eldest sons into the valley of death at Chamkaur but these things could not plunge him into gloom. When his wife asked him where his four sons had gone, his reply was characteristic of his fundamental attitude to these things. He stated :—

"What then if they four are gone?
They yet live, and shall ever live,
Millions of our dear brave sons".

Certainly no trace of grief or despair in all this. Besides this, the tenor and tone of his letter *Zafarnama* testifies to the attitude of the Guru towards sufferings. In fact, he openly

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threatened the Emperor while he wrote 'what though my four sons have been killed, my younger son, the Khalsa remains behind like a coiled snake. What bravery is it to quench a few sparks of life ? Thou art merely exciting a raging fire the more.' Nowhere and at no time the Guru was despondent; he was always active in the pursuit of his ideals.

Thus in the presence of such unimpeachable evidence, it is absurd to repose faith in the dejection theory.

The second view that the Guru went to the Deccan in the capacity of a servant of Bahadur Shah is also far from truth. Cunningham who has given currency to this theory states that the Guru received military command in the valley of Godavari. He bases his conclusion in the evidence of some Sikh writers, Forster and Khafi Khan. On examination of the references cited by Cunningham we ascertain that he had little or no acquaintance with the original works of any Sikh writers. He alludes to Vachittra Natak and at another place Gur Bilas of Bhai Sukha Singh. He seems to have referred to Bhai Gurdas Bhalla, but all these accounts do not subscribe to the theory that the Guru took service with Bahadur Shah.

So far as the authorities such as Forster and Khafi Khan are concerned, a close scrutiny of these also leads to the conclusion contrary to the service theory. Forster writes that "Guru Gobind Singh received marks of favour from Bahadur Shah who being apprised of his military qualities, gave him a charge in the army which marched into the Deccan to oppose the rebellion of Kam Backsh (Kam Baksh)". For this account, he relies on some historical tracts whose authors he names not. We have tried our best to discover those writers of the Sikhs but we have failed, and now we think that Forster might have made use of some distorted versions of the accounts of Khafi Khan or those of some detractors of the Guru. At any rate, in the absence of some authentic information, it is difficult to maintain that the Guru entered into the employment of Bahadur Shah.[1]

Khafi Khan too does not corroborate the view of Cunningham, although he, being religious bigot, was in the habit of seeing everything through the religious myopic eyeballs. He describes the Guru not as a servant but a companion of

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1. Forster himself is conscious of his shortcomings. He on page 253 of his Travels admits that he has no substantial authority from whom he could deduce the history of the Sikhs.

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Bahadur Shah. He uses for the Guru the word '*Rafaqat*' an abstract noun of Rafiq and means companionship or company. Obviously, it does not connote any difference of status between the persons concerned. Thus the service theory finds no support from the statement ot Khafi Khan. It appears that service theory originated from an intentional or accidental mistranslation of Khafi Khan's passage.

A modern writer, Mohammad Latif while upholding the service theory, quotes Malcolm. But on perusal of Malcolm's book 'Sketches of the Sikhs', it has been found that Malcolm held a diametrically opposite opinion. He nowhere in his book lent credence to this theory. Hence Latif's view is without any foundation or at best an attempt to stain the unalloyed courage of the Guru.

'Service Theory' can also be rejected in the light of the ideology and ideals of the Guru. The memory of the wrongs that had been inflicted on him and on his people were too fresh in him to have reconciled him joining the army of oppression. Nor, as Dr. G. C. Narang writes can the service theory be reconciled with the Guru's commission of Banda Bahadur to the leadership of the Punjab Khalsa.

Similary the view that the Guru accompanied Bahadur Shah to Deccan for he wanted to arouse the Rajputs and the Marhattas to contribute their mite to end the Mughal tyranny, is at once far-fetched and a mere figment of imagination. Had the Guru gone on this errand, he must have tried to see some groups of the Marhattas or of the Rajputs to gauge their strength and the will to combat the Mughal might. Since the Guru did not do any thing of the sort, it is clear that he had no purpose of this sort. No doubt in Khafi Khan's accounts one gathers that the Guru addressed to the assemblies of the people who gathered around him daily; but it does not seem probable that the Guru preached sedition or revolt against the Mughal Government because in that case it was not possible for the Guru to spend so much time in the company of the Emperor.

Having negatived the oft-held views, the issue of the real motives of the Guru while accompanying Bahadur Shah to the Deccan still remains unsolved. We think that after his meeting with the new Emperor who had given him an honourable reception, the Guru wrote to his followers in the Punjab and conveyed his appreciation of what had passed between himself and the Emperor. In his letter, Guru Gobind Singh made a very significant allusion to the purpose of his meeting with Bahadur Shah. After remembering the jewelled scarf and the Khillat

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presented to him by the Emperor, the Guru expressed his satisfaction with other matters. He then informed the Khalsa that he would return to them in a few days, enjoined on the Sikhs to remain friendly with one another and come fully armed to his presence on his return to Kahlur. The Guru seems to have believed that he would soon get justice or succeed in prevailing upon the Emperor to follow the liberal policies, to return Anandpur to him and to punish the Subedar of Sirhind for his excesses. The Hukamnama to this effect certainly epitomises a fresh approach to the problems. As a matter of fact, the Emperor throughout this period lived far-away in the south at Ahmednagar, and it is possible that he might have not been kept fully informed regarding the affairs in the Punjab. Although the late Sikh records speak of frequent appeals to the Emperor on the part of Hill Chiefs and thus give the impression that the whole campaign was being conducted with the full knowledge of the Emperor but considering the distance of Emperor's stay from the Punjab and poor means of communications and transportation their view may be considered with reservation. In this connection it is pertinent to note that no contemporary record makes mention of any representation from any party, whosoever. Sainapat makes mention of an embassy to a Sultan only once, and it is doubtful whether even here the Emperor is meant.[1]

In view of this, we may infer that the cause of the trouble was primarily the local officials including Wazir Khan, the Subedar of Sirhind, who did not brook the popularity of the Guru on account of religious as well as Imperial reasons. The crime of Wazir Khan in particular was so heinous and of so brutal a character that the Guru would have been false to himself and his ideals if he had not made efforts to get the accused punished properly. He could not resort to armed conflict any longer because of the dissipated resources and hence the only way left to him was to resort to diplomacy. Thus it is quite understandable that this was the purpose for which the Guru sought to see the Emperor. The death of Aurangzeb foiled him in his effort for a while, but he was consistent and persistent in the present course chalked out by him. It was this very purpose for which he extended his moral support to Bahadur Shah and kept himself in the Emperor's train.

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1. *Gur Sobha* ix 10. According to I.B. Bannerjee whenever Sainapat speaks of the Emperor he uses the word Shah and so it seems that by the word 'Sultan' somebody else possibly the Emperor's representative at Delhi is meant.

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The Sikh records, more or less, are definite that this was the object for the consumation of which, he joined Bahadur Shah. This thing is also quite clear from the Guru's Hukam Nama (fiat) of October 2, 1707 wherein it is written 'the old negotiations that had brought him so far, were then in progress and he soon expected to return to the Punjab.[1] But it appears that the negotiations had not yet culminated into any agreement that the Emperor started for Rajputana (12th November, 1707). The Guru had to accompany him. The Emperor, however, avoided the Guru under one pretext or the other.' Shortly after, the Guru discovered that his efforts had failed and the Emperor was not sincere in his overtures. He then, commissioned Banda to achieve by force what he had failed to accomplish only on appeal to justice.

THE GURU'S DEATH

The Guru expired on 18th October, 1708 as a result of the wound caused by the stabbing of the Guru by a certain Pathan. Various views have been expressed with regard to the circumstances of the assassination of Guru. Bhai Sukha Singh in his Gur Bilas states that two Pathan youths who were the sons of Painda Khan whom Guru Hargobind had killed in the battle of Kartarpur, came to the Guru. One day, the Guru gave one of them the sword which had been presented to the Guru and said that a man who had sword in his hand and saw the enemy of his father or grandfather before his eyes and yet failed to avenge the wrong had been born in vain. The youngman hesitated; but after a few days when he went to see the Guru, he was again aroused. He struck the Guru; his third blow penetrated into the Guru's body. Upon this there was a row and a Sikh came and cut off the Pathan's head. The wound was sewn up; but it could not be healed causing ultimately the death of the Guru.

The story, when put to critical analysis, falls flat on the ground. A son of Painda Khan who died in 1634 was by no means, a young man in 1708. Moreover, first to arouse young Pathan to kill the Guru and then to see him being killed by the Sikhs is such an incongruity inexplicable by any norm of logic.

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1. To Sangat of Dhaul. We have met the Emperor with all success and received a robe of honour and a jewelled necklace with Rs. 60,000 as a gift. We are returning shortly. Be at peace with one another. When we come to Kahlur let all the Khalsa come armed. Send 2 tolas of gold worth Rs. 40 by draft. If the messenger dallies, throw him out of the congregation. October 2, 1707.

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Another variant of the story has been given currency by Cunningham. In this variant the name of Painda Khan has been dropped and we are introduced to a Pathan merchant who had sold horses to the Guru at Anandpur. One day, when the Guru was short of funds, the Pathan came and asked for immediate payment. The Guru asked him to come on some other day. He (the Pathan) used an angry gesture, and his utterings of violence provoked the Guru to strike him dead. The body of the slain Pathan was removed and buried, and his family seemed reconciled to the fate of his head. But his sons nursed their revenge, and availed an opportunity of fulfilling it. They succeeded in stealing upon the Guru's retirement, and stabbed him mortally when asleep and unguarded.[1] Other writers such as McGregor[2] state that the Guru shortly after, realised his mistake and as a recompense for the fate of the victim, the Guru showed special favours to the widow and brought up her son as a father would do. When the boy grew to manhood, he is said to have been incited by the Guru himself to strike him. The boy did it with fatal results for the Guru. Trumpp also believes in this version and to give a rationale to it states that the Guru had been disgusted with life and wanted to end it.

The version also cannot stand the test of historical methodology. The authors of this version unanimously state, the Pathan, the father of the assailant, was killed by the Guru after escaping from Chamkaur. The Guru's escape from Chamkaur took place in December, 1705. The Guru reached Nander in September, 1708. Obviously during this period of three years (approximately) the son of the Pathan who was a child as it is asserted could not grow into manhood fully trained in the use of arms, capable of attacking the Guru who was known for his physical strength and skill in the handling of arms. The assertion that the Guru who was in the grip of abject dejection invited the attack on himself is altogether absurd, because in that case, the Guru could not have properly sewn up his wounds and carefully attended to. Moreover, if the Guru had lost all hopes and was completely disappointed he could have not appointed Banda to do his job and given parting instructions which are embodiment atonce of the gist of his mission and his spirit.

Furthermore, in recent years fresh light is thrown by a Hukamnama according to which no demand for immediate

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1. Cunningham : *History of the Sikhs*, p. 82.
2. McGregor : *History of Sikhs*, vol. I, pp. 99-100.

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payment was put before the Guru. In fact, a Pathan, who had a certain claim on the Guru did meet him, but that not only did he make no demand for the money, but actually refused to do so when reminded of it by the Guru, is shown by the Hukamnama which the Guru granted to the Pathan for his good and friendly behaviour and which is still preserved by the descendants of the Pathan.[1]

Another version of the story is given by Macauliffe : 'More probable is the account given in one of the recensions of Bahadur Shah's History—The Guru was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics, and indeed all varieties of people. One day an Afghan who frequently attended these meetings was sitting listening to him, when certain expressions which were disagreeable to the ears of the faithful fell from the Guru's tongue. The Afghan was enraged and regardless of the Guru's dignity and importance stabbed him twice or thrice with a poniard.'

This version also suffers from serious snags. We have not come across as yet, any recension of Bahadur Shah's History, giving the aforesaid details. Moreover, there is implicit in the version that the Guru spoke against Islam. This fact cannot be true because there is nothing in the life and writings of the Guru to show that he was the sworn enemy of Islam. According to Kartar Singh 'the story is a concoction of a zealous and loyal Muhammadan. By inventing this story he has detracted from the Guru's glory by depicting him as rash and indiscreet in his speech and inimical to Islam; he has glorified the murderer by representing him as acting in religious wrath aroused by the Guru's words; and he has completely absolved the Emperor and Wazir Khan of having any hand in the affair.'

The perusal of Gur Sobha by Sainapat, one of the fifty-two poets of the Guru's court and Chatur Jugi, the correct versions has come to light. Sainapat states that one day a Pathan came to the assembly that daily met around the Guru with murderous intentions. He could not have his chance because there were many persons there. He came again after two or three days. After this he came successively for several days. One evening he got his opportunity and struck the Guru with his dagger. He repeated his attack for the second time but then he was despatched. The Guru then called out his Sikhs who hurried to him. Two confederates of his who were waiting for him outside fell under the swords of the Sikhs. The Guru's wound was immediately sewn up and in a few days, it

1. Kartar Singh : *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 263.

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appeared to have healed up. But when the Guru tried to raise himself, the thread broke. The wound was sewn up again but after three or four days i.e. to say on October 7, 1708, the Guru breathed his last.

No doubt Sainapat's account is sober and free from any inconsistency, but he does not disclose the identity of the person and the motive which prompted the Pathan to do the nefarious job. Here Chatur Jugi, Khushwaqt Rai and Bakht Mal come to our rescue. The man was a hireling of Wazir Khan of Sirhind who was the real instigator of the crime. As the Guru moved with Bahadur Shah, he got apprehensive of the activities of the Guru. He knew what would happen to him if peace were made between the Mughals and the Sikhs. The Emperor had already shown an inclination to help the Guru at the expense of Nawab. He had granted a *farman* in favour of the Guru upon Wazir Khan for the payment of Rs. 300 a day. Wazir Khan was now in fear of his life and could not rest until he had got Guru Gobind Singh killed. Accordingly, he deputed a young Pathan named Jamshed Khan, to murder the Guru, who having gathered necessary information from the Guru's wife at Delhi, proceeded to Nander and accomplished the assigned job.

Bhai Vir Singh says in 'Kalghidar Chamatkar' that Bahadur Shah was personally involved in the demise of the Guru. Our probe into the historical circumstances also leads to this very conclusion. The Emperor was enraged with the Guru for deputing Banda to Punjab to renew the struggle and kill Wazir Khan. He was also afraid that the Guru might join the Marhattas in their struggle against the Mughals when the Emperor would be busy in warfare against his brother at Hyderabad. It was for this reason that though being in a hurry to reach Hyderabad as soon as possible to suppress the revolt of his brother Kam Bakhsh, he was staying at Nander and was not leaving the Guru alone. Bahadur Shah had the mistaken belief that the Guru's death would be a fatal blow to his scheme of renewing the revolution in Punjab. He therefore entered into a conspiracy with the two Pathans, Gul Khan alias Jamshed Khan and his brother Ata-ullah already deputed by Wazir Khan to put an end to the life of the Guru The following historical facts testify the involvement of Bahadur Shah in the conspiracy to kill Guru Gobind Singh.

On October 28, 1708, the Emperor ordered that a dress of mourning be presented to the son of Jamshed Khan Afghan who had been killed by Guru Gobind Singh. The imperial

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news-letter of Bahadur Shah's court records :

> "Keh Guru Gobind Singh Rai Jamshed Khan Afghan ra bajan Kushtah bud Khilat-e-Matami bapisar-i-Khan Mazkur Mrahmat shud".[1]

Jamshed Khan was not a mansabdar or a high dignitary upon whom alone high honours were bestowed by the Emperor. He was a spy of Wazir Khan in the disguise of a soldier in attendance upon the Sayyad who was also deputed by the Governor of Sirhind.

Two days after, on October 30, 1708, the Emperor ordered for the grant of a robe of mourning to Guru Gobind Singh's family.

It means that the Emperor treated Jamshed Khan and Guru Gobind Singh on equal footing, thereby confirming that Jamshed Khan enjoyed the patronage of the Emperor.

"On November 11, 1708 it was represented that the deceased Guru had left huge property". How should it be disposed ?

It was ordered that such chattles would not replete the imperial treasury. "This was the property of a darvesh (saint). There should be no interference with it".

The Emperor's refusal to attach the property of the Guru against the will of his courtiers shows his diplomacy and cunning. It was purely an eye-wash of his complicity, a pious fraud.[2]

With the death of Guru Gobind Singh the personal Guruship came to an end and the Khalsa were left to trust God and to trust themselves. All the sons of Guru Gobind Singh were already dead and there was none else to bear the burden of that great office. A lesser man could not be acceptable to the Khalsa who had known Guru Gobind Singh. This being so, they were directly linked with their Creator for whom they could live and move and have their being. The 'Eternal Bani' would always be there to guide their footsteps to Him. The Guru, on the eve of his death, opened the Granth, placed five paise and a coconut before it, bowed before it, then went around the holy book, bowed again and declared it as the Guru for all

1. Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla, dated 24 Shaba, second year of Bahadur Shah (Oct. 28, 1708) quoted by Dr. Ganda Singh in Makhiz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan, 83.

2. H. R. Gupta : *A History of Sikh Gurus*, p. 240.

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times to come. He then sang his self-composed hymn :

Under orders of the Immortal Being, the Panth was started
All the Sikhs are enjoined to accept the Granth as their Guru;
Consider the Guru Granth as representing Guru's body;
Those who want to meet God can find Him in its hymns;
The Khalsa shall rule, and its opponents will be no more,
Those separated will unite and all the devotees shall be saved.

[Agya bhai Akal ki tabhi chalayo Panth
Sab Sikhan ko hukam hai Guru mānyo Granth
Guru Granth Ji mānyo pargat Gurān di deh
Jo Prabhu ko milbo chahe khoj shabad men le
Raj karega Khalsa aqi rahe nā koe
Khwar hoe sab milange bache sharan jo hoe.]

Bhai Nand Lal reports the Guru's remarks thus :

Dusar rup Granth ji jān
Un ke ang mero kar mān
Jo Sikh Guru darshan ki chāh
Darshan karo Granth ji āh
Jo mam sāth chāho kar bāt
Granth ji parhe bichāre sāth
Jo mujh bachan sunan ki chāe
Granth ji parhe sune chit lāe
Mero rūp Granth ji jān
Is main bhed nahīn kuchh mān.

[The Granth is my second self
It should be taken for me
A Sikh who wants to see me
Should have a look at the Granth
One who is anxious to listen to my talk
He should read the Granth and listen
To its recitation with attention
Consider the Granth as my ownself
Have not the least doubt about it.]

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CULMINATION AND BEGINNING

The period of Guru Gobind Singh was atonce a period of culmination as well as beginnings. It marked the culmination because the concepts, organisational structure and goals of Sikhism became clear and concrete and elaborated to their logical end. This obviously brushed aside the views of some of scholars who are wont to champion that the tenth Guru stood away from Guru Nanak.

Concept of God

On conceptual plane, the Guru Gobind Singh was monotheist of the type of Guru Nanak. As with all the Gurus God with him was a living experience, a primal force to create, recreate and to take care of his creations; but in His social functions of God, the Guru regarded Him 'smasher of the tyrants' 'All-steel' and the protector and saviour of the righteous. This was obviously the logical development of the concept of God. Guru Nanak only once mentioned the God as "the killer of the unrighteousness." This function of God continued to be hinted by Guru Arjan also; but it fell to the tenth Guru to express this thing clearly, explicitly and unequivocally. This function was not only the result of thinking in an ivory tower, it was rooted in the social pattern which the Gurus were striving to emerge. A community of house-holders, would ill-brook God who is unconnected with them and does not protect them against the disturbers of peace and destroyers of life and property.

Guru Gobind Singh in Akal Ustat says:

"Thou art the protector of life and the
giver of all prosperity
Thou art the cure of all sorrows and sufferings "
"I bow to Him
Whom I see here as a warrior fully armed,
and there is a scholar seeking pure knowledge."

That God helped and protected his dear ones or the good, and destroyed the evil was an old recognised strand of Sikh metaphysics. Guru Gobind Singh not only laid more emphasis on this strand than was the case before but also evolved the idea further. He envisaged God as a mighty, invisible warrior armed to the teeth and ever-ready to use his powers in support of the good.

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The institution of the Guru touched its culmination point during the period of Guru Gobind Singh

This institution of Guru also touched its culmination point during the period of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru had acquired a place of great importance in Sikh religion from the very beginning. The predominant personality of the Guru supplied a nucleus around which Sikh Panth could rally.

Evolution of the Sikh scriptures

Still another respect in which the tenth Guru brought to completion the development of an important old institution was the evolution of the Sikh scriptures. Guru Arjan Dev had done a great job by authenticating the diverse compositions and preparing a single holy book for the benefit of his people. But since then, the work had remained where it was left. Guru Gobind Singh included in it the Slokas of his father and put the seal of finality on it. Subsequently, this finalised version of Adi Granth was invested with Guruship.

Institution of Sangat

Besides, he completed the evolution of institution known as Sangat. In the beginning, it was merely a religious gathering of devotees, functioning more or less in isolation. Gradually there was increase in its function, and the isolation of one from the other was lessened by the forging of common links, such as building up certain religious centres, institution of *manjis* and *masands* as the agencies of the central leadership and the assertion of the principle of the supremacy of the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh raised them to the state of Khalsa having thereby investing them with the rights and powers of dealing with the Guru's directly instead of through some agency. According to Dr. Fauja Singh "With the foundation of the Khalsa, the network of semi-integrated Sangat was fully integrated." The investing of the Khalsa with supreme powers marked the completion of the historical process long underway.

The institution of Guruship also touched its culminating point under the direction of Guru Gobind Singh. Throughout the development of Sikhism in the pre-Gobindian period, the Guru had been assigned a place of predominance and significance. Guru Nanak regards the Guru as an absolute necessity. Guru Nanak, in so many verses, highlights this point. As a matter of fact in Guru Nanak's system, the Guru formed the pivot on which everything else hanged. The disciple was asked to walk in the path of God, to remain ever content with

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His will and to obey His commands. But in these matters, as in everything else, the Guru was to point out the right path, he was to interpret the will of God, and the commands of the Almighty were also to issue forth through the medium of his ordinances. The Guru, therefore, was to be implicitly obeyed. In the Guru Granth, this fact is emphasised again and again. We can glean a large number of verses from the compositions. Guru Amar Das, Ram Das and Arjan Dev enjoin upon us to obey the Guru in letter and spirit. Guru Ram Das says:

"Sikhs of the Guru and friends, walk in God's way.
Faithfully obey what the Guru preacheth.
Hear, servants of God and brethren, serve the Guru very promptly.
Tie up service to the Guru as Thy travelling expenses to God,
Think not of to-day or to-morrow."

Sikh tradition is also eloquent on this point. Bhai Gurdas who lived in the late 16th century says in his exposition of the essence of the Sikh religion, "The Sikh who receiveth the Guru's instruction is really a Sikh. To become a disciple must be like a purchased slave, fit to be yoked to any work which may serve his Guru. Love none but the Guru; all other love is false (Mac. iv, 244-63).

A natural consequence of such teaching was the unquestioning devotion of the Sikhs to their spiritual head. The author of Dabistan who had frequent intercourse with Guru Har Gobind narrates a story how a certain Guru praised a parrot and a Sikh immediately went to its owner and offered to barter his wife and daughter for the bird. This story and many others of this type which we cannot afford to narrate here on account of the paucity of space, testify one thing atleast that the Sikhs had got utmost devotion for their Guru. Sujan Rai of Batala wrote in 1696, "The reliance which this sect (Sikhs) has on its leader is seldom seen in other sects. If a way-farer arrived at mid night and takes the name of Baba Nanak, he is treated as a brother" (India of Aurangzeb page 91).

"The implicit faith in a common superior knit the Sikhs together like the soldiers of the regiment. The predominant personality of the Guru supplied a nucleus around which the Sikh Panth could gradually arise." "Under the leadership of the Sikh Gurus, the Sikhs evolved a sense of corporate unity which found expression through their behaviour and institutions such as *langar* and *Sangat*."

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But what was the sense where the Guru came to hold upto the period of Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru was understood in three ways: The Guru was God, he was the voice of God and, he was the 'word', the Truth of God. A large number of verses can be quoted in support of the aforesaid three senses in which the Guru was held.

If we go deeper we will find complete identification of the apparently different sense. The following passage amply proves our point:

> "The word is Guru and the mind (which is focused on it continually) is the disciple. By dwelling on the ineffable one, on Him the eternal Guru-Gopa, I remain detached, it is only through the word that I dwell on Him and so through the Guru, the fire of Haumai is extinguished."[1]
> (Sidh Gosti, 44 G.G. p. 943).

The passage quoted above from Siddh Gosht brings out this identity not just with the pronouncement that the word is the Guru but also with the reference to the Guru-Gopal. God Himself is Truth.

Closely connected with the above definition of the Guru is the question "were the Sikh Gurus not Gurus?" They were Gurus but in the sense that they were the perfect personalities embodying in themselves 'The Truth'. Conveying only the truth; their persons, in themselves, were not Gurus. This fact the Gurus themselves brought home to the people by example and precept.

It is stated in the old Janam Sakhi that when Guru Nanak finally resolved to make Lahina his successor, he put five paisa before Guru Angad and fell down before his feet. In the Tikke di War or the Coronation Ode we are told that "Guru Nanak in bowing to Guru Angad reversed the order of things." It shows that from the very beginning the impersonal character of Guruship was recognised. The personality of the Guru was detached from the spirit of Guruship which was to be regarded as one, indivisible and even continuous.

Further the fact that the name Lahina was changed to Angad must be regarded as equally significant. Speaking of the nomination of Angad to the Guruship, the Coronation Ode

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1. Translation by McLeod : "Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion".

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says, "He had the same light, the same ways, the thing merely changed his own body." His idea is stressed again and again in the Sikh writings. The Guruship was something apart from the personality of the Guru and this would explain how the successive Gurus could be regarded identical.

Mohsin Fani says, "They (The Sikhs) believe that when Nanak expired, his spirit became incarnate in the person of Angad, who attended him as his confidential servant. Angad at his death transmitted his soul into the body of Amar Das; and this Guru in the same manner conveyed his spirit into the body of Ram Das; whose soul transmitted at the person of Arjan Mal; in short they believe that, with a mere change of name, Nanak the first became Nanak the second and so on, to the fifth in the person of Arjan Mal. They say that whoever does not recognise in Arjan Mal the true Baba Nanak, is an unbeliever." In their hymns and compositions all the Gurus designated themselves as Nanak. Even in private correspondence they signed as 'Nanak'. This thing was even observed by the author of Bahadur Shah Nama who called Guru Gobind Singh as 'Guru Gobind Nanak'. Guru Gobind Singh himself declares that the Gurus were one and that without understanding, perfection could not be attained. Guru Gobind Singh says:

"Nanak assumed the body of Angad
And made his religion current in the world
Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das
As one lamp is lit from another
The holy Nanak was revered as Angad
Angad was recognised as Amar Das,
And Amar Das became Ram Das,
The pious saw this, but not the fools
Who taught them all distinct;
But some rare persons recognised that they were all one
They who understood this obtained perfection.

Without understanding this perfection cannot be attained. Guru Gobind Singh was not only fully conversant with the different strands of the concept of Guru but also subscribed to them.

For some time, the Guru did not effect any change. Then quite few developments that had taken place prompted him to effect some change. One was the nature of relations between the Sikhs vis-a-vis the Guru. Dr. A.C. Bannerjee says, "The importance attached to the Guru, did not, however, create a

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community depending on autocratic leadership. The ideal of brotherhood was an active principle from the very beginning. As a result, the Sikh community was governed by principles of equality and democracy. Even the Gurus' unconditional surrender to whom was one of the cardinal doctrine of Sikhism, respected the wishes of their disciples in all matters. The individual Sikh was exalted to a position almost to that of the Guru himself. Guru Ram Das said:

To those who obey the will of the Guru,
I am sacrifice
I am ever a sacrifice to those who served the Guru.

Quite a large number of verses can be gleaned to prove the veracity of the aforesaid point.

Invested the Khalsa with Gurushiip

The next important development was that the unity of Sikhs was being disturbed by the emergence of the imposter Gurus of dissentient sects and the degenerate Masands. To keep unity among the Sikhs was the most important need of the time. This thing lurked in his mind when he took the momentous decision of making changes in the institution of the Guru. He in 1699 on the day of Baisakhi made a pronouncement to the effect that henceforward, the Khalsa was his form, limb of his limb and breath of his breath. "He invested the sect with the dignity of Gurdom." In the Keshgarh assembly the Guru received baptism from five worthy Sikhs. When they were astonished at his proposal he said, "The Khalsa is the Guru and the Guru is the Khalsa. There is no difference between you and me. As Guru Nanak seated Guru Angad on the throne, so have I made you also a Guru."

The investing of Guruship on the Khalsa was a step of great benefit to the Sikh community. It seems that the abolition of the Guruship, had a logical connection with the Gurus' war against sectarianism within the Sikh community. The sects owed their origin to the ambition of the disappointed candidates for the 'Takht'. It was not enough to boycot the existing sects; the origin of new sects must be prevented. The abolition of the Guruship was the only remedy of the disease.[1] Furthermore to impart divinity to each individual of the Khalsa organisation was to impart confidence and the role they were destined to play. Besides this, it also ensured democratic functioning of the Khalsa and their compactness.

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1. A.C. Bannerjee, "Anglo Sikh Relations, ixvi."

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But this development was the culmination of the process that had set in since the inception of Sikhism. The Guru could impart Guruship to the Khalsa because essence of Guruship being truth or word was something impersonal. And to the Khalsa he gave Guruship because, the Sikhs had already been exalted to equal to the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh was able to transmit Guruship to the Sikhs because there was no elective principle involved in the selection of the Guru. Each Guru was nominated by his predecessor. He could snap the human link; but the idea of the new links had been prepared by the earlier Gurus.

Guru Gobind Singh affected another change in Guruship on the eve of his death at Nander when he spoke to his disciples that they should also regard Guru Granth Sahib as their Guru along with the Panth (Khalsa), The injunction that the Granth should also be considered as 'Guru' was also the culmination of the development underway. Word (Shabad) had already given the status of Guru by all the Gurus. If the relative emphasis is a good guide to some conclusion, we can say that this point was more frequently stressed by Guru Arjan Dev. Guru Gobind Singh, obviously comprehending the correct import and significance of this point. This being so he completed Adi Granth by including the verses of Guru Tegh Bahadur in it and made categorical statement investing 'Adi Granth' with Guruship. The development also could be effected because of the impersonal character of Guruship and the mystic identification of the Guru with the word –the facts which were emphasised upon from the beginning of Sikh History.

Guru Gobind Singh also completed the social and religious revolutions inaugurated by Guru Nanak. The successors of Guru Nanak had guided these revolutions with great devotion and ability. Yet there were some lapses to be seen at the time of Guru Gobind Singh's accession. The creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh was not merely an endeavour to integrate the members of his community, it was also and as much a powerful bid to carry to completion his predecessor's resolutions in the fields of social and religious life. The code of conduct prescribed for the newly-created Khalsa was so devised as to impose a strict discipline on the Sikhs so as to ensure firm adherence on their part to the lofty ideals of Sikhism.

Theory of Struggle

The clear-cut formulation of the Dharma Yudh theory was also the work of Guru Gobind Singh. This theory can also

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be interpreted as the Theory of Progress. This theory in rudimentary form, was already there. The Gurus preceding him followed it not only in their work-a-day life but also preached it through their sacred compositions. The vitriolic comments of Guru Nanak on the contemporary political and social systems are obviously indicative of some sort of struggle raging in his mind to establish new politico-social set-up.

The cheap and senseless imitation on their part of their ruler's ways, with no other object than that of placating them was exposed as an act of servility and submission to a tyrant was dubbed as an act of shameful cowardice. Compromise with injustice or tyranny was thus shown as a great evil and fearlessness or heroism in resistance to a great virtue. According to Guru Arjan Dev this fight between good and evil, God's support, would be always on the side of good, for He is verily[1] the smiter of the evil and the wicked and since time immemorial has been the unfailing protector of the good as against their enemies. Guru Ram Das says: "In all Jugas He has been creating savents and in all Jugas has their honour been protected by Him. Harnaksh the tyrant was smashed by Him and Prehlad the victim saved. The arrogant and the foul-tongued were forsaken while favours were showered upon Namdev."[2] Guru Arjan depicts Sikh devotees as Mall or Pehlwanra (wrestlers) in the wrestling bouts between good and evil.[3]

It was exactly to highlight this type of thinking that Guru Arjan Dev in his parting message to his sonad vised him to wear two swords one symbolising Shakti and the other Bhakti. Guru Hargobind, on his part, addressed himself to the tasks of shaping the minds of the people to rise and fight against injustice and un-righteousness. He, collected arms, trained his people in the technique of fighting by organising regular training exercises and roused them to a sense of fervent heroism by precept as well as by example. He also fought a few successful local military actions in which he and his men displayed marvels of valour. All this led to the building up of a glorious and never-to-be-forgotten tradition of heroism.

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1. Guru Arjan, Var Gujri Adi Granth p. 517.
   "Sakat Ninda Dusht Khin Mahe Bidariyan"
   (He smites the evil-minded, the ill-tongued and the wicked in a second.)
2. Asa Mohalla 4 Chhant Ghar 4, Adi Granth, p. 451.
3. Guru Arjan in Sri Rag, Adi Granth, p. 74,

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After a brief interval of about 40 years, this tradition was further enriched by the ninth Guru. He, by his sacrifice, not only vindicated his faith in his stand, but also taught a lesson that oppression must be resisted. According to Dr. Fauja Singh, "the sacrifice of the Guru blazed a new trail in so far as it was a commitment to an open struggle against the organised oppression of the state."

This then was the ideology which Guru Gobind Singh inherited. The Guru so modified it that it became a theory of struggle which would not only explain its aims but also boost the moral of the participants. He named this theory Dharm Yudh. The theory finalised by the Guru had the following adjuncts:

(i) that God was eternal protector of the good against the oppressors and their detractors, He was also the mightiest warrior;

(ii) that it was morally justified to wage wars against the evil forces and tyranny;

(iii) that the use of force was justified against oppression and oppressors of all kinds.

This is why the Guru was motivated to raise the importance of weapons as they constituted the vehicle of success and power. Weapons were depicted as decorating the person of the Almighty Himself thus partaking of the attribute of divinity. In consequence they were entitled to all respect and veneration. The chief of them, the sword, was called Khal Dal Khandan (scatterer of the armies of the wicked), Sukh Santa Karnan (protector of the saints), Durmat Darnam (scourage of the evil), jag karan (creator), sarist ubharan (saviour) and pratparan (sustainer). Although the force was of primoral importance in Guru Gobind Singh's theory of Dharam Yudh, it should not be confused with militarin. In militarin force is employed for the sake of force, aggression and self-aggrandisement, but the Guru allowed its use only for a noble cause and that too as a remedy of the last resort.

It is the moral duty of the people to wage war against evil. Guru Gobind Singh professed openly that he had been ordained by God to extripate the evil and uphold the good.

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In this context evidence of Bhai Nand Lal is of great importance. He says :

Rakh-i-Adl o Insaf Afrokhtah
Dil-i-Jabar o bedad ra Sokhta
Bina-i-Sitam ra Bar Andikhta
Sar-i-ma dalat ra bar Afrokhta

"He brightened up the force of equity and justice and burnt down the heart of tyranny and inequity. He uprooted the foundation of cruelty and lifted the head to justice."

It is the moral duty of the people to wage war against evil. Guru Gobind Singh professes openly that he had been ordained by God to extirpate the evil and uphold the good.

The theory of Dharm Yudh of the Guru has been expressed very beautifully in the following excerpt from his composition 'Krishnaavtar'.

Glory to noble souls who on their earthly way
Carry upon their lips the Name of the Lord,
And ever contemplate deep within hearts
the good fights spirit.
Knowing that the body is a fleeting vesture,
They make the Lord's song, they make the Lord's Name
A boat to carry them over life's rough ocean,
They wear as a garment that is as a fortress
serene detachment;
Divine knowledge is the light of their minds
Their cleaver's broom in their wise hands
Is the broom of wisdom
With it they sweep all cowardice and all falsehood.

The contemporary source such as Guru Sobha also lends evidence to the theory of Dharam Yudh when he says :

For this was the Khalsa created
To fight the evil to smite the wicked
And to get rid of crisis.

(Gur Sobha 14/130)

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"Dharam Yudh" as preached by Guru Gobind Singh was "not a fight to protect or promote the interests of a particular sect or creed and hence is to be distinguished from the Christian crusade of medieval period and the Muslim *Jehad* of the familiar variety, nor was it a religious war in the usual sense of the term. It was a moral war waged for the victory of good over evil, for the triumph of reighteousness over tyranny and oppression. His concept in traditional ethical terms was analogous to Goddess Durga's fight with the demons Mehk Hasar, Sumbh and Nisumbh, to Lord Rama's fight with Ravana of Lanka or to Lord Krishna's struggle with Kansa. It was based on dynamic view of religion which in its essence was a social catalyst. The Guru viewed religion as something committedly concerned with the problems of society and as it had a vital role to play in human affairs. It must work for a healthy flow of social or collective life and must of necessity contend against the ills hampering the smooth and unhindered mainstream of its existence. But the revolutionary role that the Guru visualised for religion was not to be stinted in any way by harnessing it to the narrow interests of any particular religious creed or dogma; on the contrary it was to be conducted with a view to the general good of the society."

(Dr. Fauja Singh's article "Guru Gobind Singh: An estimate of his work and personality.)

Political and Social Views

Furthermore the political and social ideals were concretised and institutionalised. Before Guru Gobind Singh it was not so; the Guru's credit is that he was forthright, equivocal and clear in putting forth his views on social, political and cultural matters. (See chapters on Sikh Polity and Sikh Social Ideals).

Period of Great Beginnings

But the period of Guru Gobind Singh was not merely a period of culmination; it was also a period of beginnings. By his reforms and under the impact of his dynamic and magnetic leadership, the Sikh Community was not only strengthened but also converted to a great vehicle of revolution.

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Sikh Polity
and
Sikh Social Ideals

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Chapter 14

SIKH POLITY

Before determining the pattern of Sikh Polity we will have to find answers to certain important questions: (i) Did politics fall within the jurisdiction of Sikh religion; (ii) Did the Gurus take interest in political affairs; (iii) Did political power or basic moral issues form the fulcrum of the interest of the Gurus?

So far as the first question is concerned, our reply is that politics fell within the jurisdiction of the religion of the Gurus. This fact can be supported by adducing moral as well as historical arguments. The Gurus, as it is ascertained from their utterances, wanted to establish an order where goodness should prevail and unrighteousness be eliminated, and where people should have absolute faith in the oneness of God. To make the people righteous, the Gurus laid emphasis on the discipline of the individuals as also of the groups. In 'Jap' Guru Nanak spells out the steps which one should take to regenerate oneself. It is also mentioned that the regenerate should endeavour to make the society righteous.

The regenerate persons are variously known in Sikh religious literature. Guru Nanak calls them *Gurmukhs*, Guru Arjan Dev *Brahm Giani* and Guru Gobind Singh *Khalsa*. Now what is unrighteousness? The Guru, somewhere explicitly and somewhere implicitly, explains that what is not based on justice, fellow-feeling, liberty and equality is unrighteous or oppression. But how to ensure righteousness? Obviously some agency is needed and in fact since the inception of the civilized society, the need has continuously been felt.

It was this need to which state and politics owe its existence. As a matter of fact, need to translate certain moral issues have always been the determinant of the nature and pattern of the political power. In tribal society the panchayats or patriarch of a tribe was the symbol of power. When the society transcended that stage, the oligarchy became the wielder of the power more. Oligarchy gave place to monarchy when the former outlived its advantage. The changes in the society on moral and social planes always effected corresponding changes in the polity or the agency to wield political power.

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The Sikh Gurus were committed to certain moral issues which formed the basis of the society of their concept could not help take interest in politics. But their interest was not simply an expression of their anguish for the political unrighteousness but it had a moral dimension also. For a proper appreciation of Guru Nanak's response to the events in question, the *Babar Vani* verses must be considered together. In these, Guru Nanak mentions the sufferings caused by war and explains that all this has happened because of the people's blind pursuit of wealth and riches. Because of wealth, it went hard with many, wealth cannot be amassed without sins and it does not accompany the dead. Indeed, "He who is destroyed is first deprived of his virtue."[1]

It is thus clear that Guru Nanak's response to war and to sufferings caused by war is not only an ample expression of his rage but also involved a moral issue, the issue of the importance of virtue in the nation's healthy growth and stance.

Historical references in Guru Granth Sahib also go to prove that political affairs were not alien to the Guru's religion. Guru Nanak's familiarity, even interest in contemporary politics may be inferred from the occurrence in his verses of the phrases : Sultan, patshah, Shah-i-Alam, takht, taj, hukm, malik, shiqder, qazi, chaudhari, muqqaddam, raiyat. Also Guru Nanak makes use of the references such as court, palaces, royal canopy, elephants, armour, cavalry trumpets, treasury, coins, mint, salary, taxes and revenue-free land.[2] Furthermore, in one of his hymns, Guru Nanak, in a general reference, called the Rajas as "blood sucking rajas".

"The rajas are lions and the muqqaddams dogs;
They fall upon the raiyat day and night.
Their agents inflict wounds with claws (of power)
And the dogs lick blood and relish the liver".[3]

A condemnation of contemporary rule is unmistakable here. It may be pointed out, however, that Guru Nanak's attack is not directed against the rulers as 'Muslims' or as 'Hindus'. In fact, the bracketing of the Muqaddams (who in-

1. Guru Granth Sahib, pp. 417-18.
2. The relevent verses occur in Sri Rag (Astpadian), Rag Gauri (Astpadian), Rag Asa, Japji, Rag Vadhans (Chhant and Alahnian), Var Majh etc.
3. Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1288, Var Malar.

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variably was non-Muslim) with the rajas strongly suggests that Guru Nanak adopts the standpoint of common people, the raiyat, as against the rulers and their subordinates or agents. In another verse, Guru Nanak appears to assume a close connection between the holders of political power and the respective professions of their faith; he notices also a 'discrimination' against those who do not belong to their faith. Guru Nanak says :

"The ād Purkh is called Allah,

Now that the turn of the Shaikhs has come;

The gods and their temples are taxed
Such is now the custom."[1]

The successors of Nanak also had full knowledge of contemporary political affairs. As Guru Arjan assumed pontificate and took some steps to consolidate Sikhism, Jahangir began to view him with suspicion. Guru Arjan was also responsive to the political stands of the state. Perceiving the reaction that his activities had evoked in the Government circles, the Guru embarked upon the course of preparing his people to face the challenges, polemical as well as physical, with determination and wisdom. On the eve of his departure to Lahore in response to the summons of Jahangir, Guru Arjan left a message for his son Guru Hargobind that he should sit manfully on the throne and maintain as much army as he could afford. The message was an epitome of the active interest of fifth Guru in politics. A little earlier than the moment referred to above, the fifth Guru advised Bidhi Chand and Pairana to join the personal staff of Hargobind and hinted that their martial qualities would be utilized fully in the period of his son, Guru Hargobind whose policy of Miri and Piri left absolutely no doubt that the political affairs were not extraneous to the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. So is the case of Guru Harkrishan and Guru Har Rai. Guru Har Rai's keen interest in the welfare of Dara bears out our aforesaid assertion. Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution and Guru Gobind Singh's wars against the Mughals and hill rajas also point to the conclusion that the Gurus were as much alive to the contemporary political happenings as to their moral and spiritual

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1. Basant A.G. 1191.

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objectives. In Bachittar Natak XIII, 9-10, Guru Gobind Singh writes :

"Those of Baba (Nanak) and those of Babar
God Himself makes them both know the former thus :
as the king of Religion.
Guess the later then as the worldly king.
They who fail to render that
what is due to the (House of) Baba
The minions of Babur seize them and make
exactions upon them
And inflict severe punishments upon such defaulter;
In addition, their worldly goods and
property are looted and taken away."

In these lines the Guru says in unambiguous terms that there are two forces which claim allegiance of men's souls on earth, the Truth and Morality as Religion, and the state as embodiment of mere utilitarianism and secular politics. The primary allegiance of man is to the truth and morality, and those who fail in this allegiance, suffer and under the subjugation of wordly state, unnourished by the courage and hope which is born through un-swerving adherence to the primary allegiance. In this perpetual struggle between the state and the church, for exclusive possession of the soul of man, a man of culture and religion, shall not lose sight ever of his primary allegiance and he who does so, does it at this own peril, for by doing so, he helps give birth to times in which everything is force, politics utility and poverty. The Guru does not assert that his perpetual dichotomy and antagonism of the church and the state must be resolved, or even that it is capable of being resolved, by the suppression or subjugation of the one by the other; rather, he appears to recognise their eternal antagonism and character and in this antagonism sees the hope and glory of man, the social and political context in which the Sikh way of life is to be practised. The church must perpetually correct and influence the state without aiming to destroy or absorb it, as the History shows the attempt of the one to oust the other meets with no lasting success and each of the two antagonistic entities arise again after having been crushed in vain and both appear as if bound together. This is what the Guru means, when he declares in the Text, that the House of Baba Nanak and the house of Babar, God maketh both of them and those who repudiate their allegiance to the House of Nanak suffer grievously, without hope at the hands of the state. Obviously the Guru's corpus of thought includes also the matters which are essentially political.

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ORIGIN OF SOVEREIGN POWER

Having decided that the Guru's moral order does not exclude political matters, the next question which arises is "Did the Gurus have some definite idea of polity."

The Gurus were not political philosophers in the sense Plato and Rousseau were and hence we do not find any particular political thesis in their writings or utterances. All the same, there are hints scattered in their different writings which give quite distinct picture of the polity visualized by the Gurus. The cornerstone of the polity was that the sovereignty resided in the people. The Gurus say "The Guru's sovereignty is full of twenty measures, but that of the Sangat, as the mouth piece of the people is of over-riding paramountcy, of twenty-one measures. This diction repeatedly occurs throughout the Sikh literature from the earliest times as the basic principle of organisation and exercise of power, in the Sikh society. Guru Nanak, in the sixteenth cant (Pauri) of 'Jap' says the 'Panch' must be recognised in the organization of power (literally in the court). The Panches alone are fit to occupy seats of supreme authority for exercise of power—the guiding light of the Pancha being their objective.

The 'Panch' here connotes 'people of five directions, meaning thereby people of the four directions of the compass and the people residing at the centre, the venue of the assembly.' It was in exegesis of this text of Guru Granth Sahib apparently, that Guru Gobind Singh while glorifying the Panj Pyaras declared, "I am ever present unseen, in the collective deliberations of the Panchas and there is no higher guidance on earth besides."[1] According to Guru Gobind Singh "the spirit of the people is the spirit of God. When anyone, causes suffering to the people God's wrath falls on him."[2] Once when a very prominent Brahman, Kesho Datt, visited Anandpur, he felt insulted for not being given privileged treatment. He condemned outright and cursed, what he called the low-caste crowd of the Sikhs who were treated better than the Brahmins and Kshatriyas.

Guru Gobind Singh calmly replied, "Do not blame me for ignoring you, for all are equal in my eyes. I will send you the beddings and other things you need, but do not say a word

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1. Kapur Singh : *Parashar Prasna*, p. 349.
2. Khalak Khalak Ki Jankai, Khalak dukhavai nah : Guru Gobind Singh (Tankhahnama).

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against my inspired disicples."[1] Then glorifying the people, who were condemned by the Brahmans, the Guru said :

All the battles I have won against tyranny
I have fought with the devoted backing of these people.
Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts
Through their help I have escaped.....
The love and generosity of the Sikhs
Have enriched my heart and home.
Through their grace I have attained all learning.
Through their help in battle, I have slain my enemies
I was born to serve them, through them I reached eminence
What would I have been without their kind and ready help ?
There are millions of insignificant people like me
True service is the service of these people;
I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes.
Charity will bear fruit in this and the next world
If given to such worthy people as these
All other sacrifices and charity is profitless
From head to foot, whatever I call my own
All I possess or carry, dedicate to these people.[2]

Guru Gobind Singh wrote this unique 'song of the people' glorifying their innate strength and power merely sixty years before Rousseau wrote his 'Social contract' and about 150 years before Marx formulated his manifesto. As a matter of fact, for the Gurus, the people were the prophets of future; they were the first to point out in world history that the fate of future civilizations was not in the hands of mighty individuals but in the hands of morally and spiritually awake nations.

By people, the Gurus do not mean people of a particular society, religious group or social organization rather the people in general, the people of the whole world, the whole mankind. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh 'the concept of society is found in two senses in the writings of the Sikh Gurus. It is

1. Sikhism and Indian Society. Publisher : Indian Institute of Advanced Studies.
2. Guru Gobind Singh, Dasam Granth, as translated by Dr. Trilochan Singh.

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generally synonymous with human society. It is also used in a limited sense for religious groups. When, for example, Guru Nanak criticises the dirty practices of the Jains, he does not condemn the religion but only the social aspect of this religious society. When Guru Nanak says, "The age is a drawn sword, the kings are butchers, goodness hath taken wings and flown; in the dark night of falsehood, I see not the moon of Truth anywhere," he is not speaking of the rulers of any particular state or country but of the world situation at that time. In his writings, Guru Gobind Singh addresses the whole human society. Even if he refers to a particular person or group, the lesson is for the whole mankind. Guru Amar Das has made it clear : parthaī sakhi mahā purkh bolde, sanjhi sagal jāhane "When sages speak about a particular person the moral is for the whole humanity."[1]

Even the national cultures which divide people are regarded by the Gurus as superficial and artificial. The reasons assigned for such differences by Guru Gobind Singh are: Nyare, nyare, desan ko prabhāo hai; different social customs environments and manners of different countries have created these differences.

Prof. J. S. Bains, in his article 'political ideas of Guru Gobind Singh' says that "In conformity with the teachings of Guru Nanak, the Tenth Guru had argued that authority in every sphere ultimately derives its validity from God and not from any human source." In support of his thesis the learned professor writes, "In the Zafar Nama which was addressed to Aurangzeb, the Guru had mentioned that the God is the true emperor of earth and heaven and that He is the Master of both the worlds." He (the Guru) dilated on this point with more clarity when he said :

The successors of both Baba Nanak and Babar
Were created by God Himself.
Recognize the former as a spiritual
And the latter as a temporal ruler.

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1. Dr. Trilochan Singh : Social Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh : Article published in transaction of the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Vol. IV, 1967.

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According to the learned professor a similar idea was portrayed by the Gurus when they uttered the following words :

"By his (God's) hukam are all things formed
Not one is blessed, save by his hukamnama
by his hukam alone nature doth ruin her course,
All serve beneath his hukam, and none may act
without it
Under thy hukam, O God, hath all been done
and naught of itself alone."

We, however, do not agree with the Professor who in our view, has not been able to correctly interpret the verses of Guru Gobind Singh. The original text nowhere says, explicitly or by implication that the church and the state 'both derive authority from God Himself.' It only says 'God maketh them both' as the instruments of His will. The word in the text, kare, neither literally, nor here can be interpreted to mean 'authorized'; it simply means made by or maketh. Similarly the word pehchano (ਪਹਚਾਨੋ) does not mean in the sense of a commandment thou shalt recognize. It means, know, identify, understand, perceive. The (House) of Baba means the true religion on earth, and the text says, understand the term to mean thus as such. Likewise Unmano (understand) cannot and does not mean 'recognise' and 'accept'. It literally and here in the text means understand, see, guess, infer, that the house of Babur means, the secular worldly state.

That the people were held to be the wielder of sovereign powers in Sikh polity can be seen from the examples of the Gurus. Once the Guru saluted the shrine of Dadu. The Sikhs objected to this act of the Guru on the ground that it was not in conformity with the fundamental Sikh tenets and did not hesitate fining the Guru. The classic example of the high esteem in which the Guru held the Sikhs was when after selecting the 'five loved ones', he drank the holy water at their hands, thereby giving the Khalsa the pride of having selected their leader. This emphasis on popular basis of sovereignty and its equation with divine mandate was a unique idea and may be considered as a distinct contribution to democratic theory.[1]

The next issue before us is this as how the sovereignty should operate. The Gurus seemed to be aware of this problem. They evolved various organizations for the people's sovereignty

1. S. Kapur Singh : *Prasar Prasan*, p. 324.

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to be exercised. The most important among them is the institution of 'Sangat'.

Sangat means an assembly, a union of men, a gathering. One of the main teachings of the Gurus to all those who brought faith in them was to form Sangats. Wherever Guru Nanak went, the Sikhs built a Gurdwara and met every day and formed a regular Sangat. When the Siddas asked the Guru Nanak to show them miracles, the Guru replied : "I have no power for miracles. I derive all my power from the word (Bani), and the Sangat. Away from Sangat, there is not a mole to support me." Anyone irrespective of caste, creed and cline can become the member of the Sangat. All services can be performed by the Sikh and non-Sikh devotees except the functions of baptism which can be performed by the ordained Khalsa who has lived upto the ideals. Sangat is not merely a gathering of worshippers nor is it just a forum for seeking personal salvation and blessedness, but it has stood for the total re-orientation of life of the individuals and society towards a creative purposeful existence. This being so, all the discussions concerning every aspect of man's life—from fair dealings in business and from disputes to inner coflicts of the soul and the priests were referred to the Sangat. Sangat was considered to be so important that even the Gurus used to submit to the decisions of it. Guru Arjan did not marry his son in the family because Sangat had decided it otherwise.

In fact, the decisions of the Sangats have always been considered something based on reason, dispassionate and unbiased deliberations, the verdicts of a composite higher self-subordinating, the petty considerations of the composite lower self—Man Niwan—Mati Uchchi Mati ka Rakha Wahi Guru. Such decisions are considered to be the decisions of God who guides men's reasons which are not overcome by personal or emotional considerations. Such an atmosphere prevails among the members of the Sangat sitting at a place which has assumed the name 'Gurdwara', the door of the Guru.

The idea of Sangat is very old in India and if its etymology is traced, it was grounded in the polity of the early Indo-Aryans. There is a mention of Samiti, or a folk-assembly in Rig Veda where there is a prayer for 'a common assembly and a common policy'. In Atharva Veda also, the aforesaid assembly has been spoken of. The Atharva declares that 'this samiti, the Sikh equivalent of which is the Sangat, as a daughter of God'. The institution of Sangat continued to serve the

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society till it got smothered under the weight of monarchical institutions.

As regards the composition of Sangat, it may be said that it is composed of the people, sincere, truthful and honest, dedicated to the Guru's cause which is no other than the cause of the people. Sangat, like the Sangh of the Budhists and the Samiti or Sabha of the Indo-Aryans, is no Sangat if its members are not well-meaning and honest. The members who do not speak and act bonafides, are no honest members, and the honest and well-meaning members are those who are not swayed by bias or favour and who speak out truthfully and fearlessly.

So far as the mode of functioning of Sangat is concerned, it is very simple and straight. There is always a congregation in the Gurdwara in the morning and evening. At the end of the prayers the aggrieved person would stand up with his hands folded and submit his complaint to the gathering or he could make a report to the Granthi the priest of the Gurwara who would arrange to convey it to the Sangat. The Sangat may take a snap decision or may decide upon some other procedure to satisfy the complainant. Mohsan Fani, a contemporary of the sixth Guru, and a traveller from Iran was wonderstruck at the amount and intensity of one's faith in the Sangat. He found that a Sikh would stand up and submit with his folded hands to the Sangat that he is sinful and the Sangat should pray to God, the Guru, to pardon and forgive his misdeeds and grant him salvation. His inner conflicts were removed and he enjoyed peace of the mind. If he lived the remaining life with caution, he was sure to die a happy man.

Sangat's working is a two way game. Every member of the Sangat should have a faith in it and every person who sits in the Sangat should be a disciplined citizen of the Guru's kingdom. Thus there should be perfect rapport between the complainant and the collective will of the Sangat. The complainant should feel that his own voice is also a part of the people's voice and the Sangat is not only his own self, enlarged and widened, but because of its process of collectivity, it has gained a high degree of divinity and hence its decisions will be just and true.

PANTH AND GURMATA

Next to Sangat in the heirarchy of political organisations is the regional Sangat or circle Sangat. During the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur there was Bari Sangat at Dacca whose duty was to guide the local Sangats as also to devise plans for the benefit of the Sikhs and the people spread over in that area.

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Next to regional Sangat is the institution of Panth which, according to Kapur Singh, is the whole commonwealth represensented by the peoples' assembly of indirct representation. The occasional meets of the whole panth is a long standing tradition in the history of the Khalsa. In the days of the Gurus, Sikh Sangat in small representative Jathas used to come from all the Sikh centres and listened to the Guru's word for some days. At these annual meets, the Guru also gave instructions about the propagation of the Sikh way of life. When Guru Gobind Singh passed on Guruship to Adi Granth and Panth, the institution of Panth acquired unique importance, and no wonder the Sikhs began to look upon this institution the apex of their organisation.

After the defeat of Banda, the Mughal Rulers began persecution and execution of the Sikhs with great vengeance. The Sikhs organised themselves into Jathas and returned to some local or far off hiding jungles, hills or deserts of Bikaner. Irrespective of blockade by the enemy, the Sikhs would come to Amritsar at least two times a year i.e. to say on the Diwali and Baisakhi days. Such meets came to be known as the meets of the 'Panth'. It is well known that it was in these meets that very important decisions were taken—the decisions which played significant role in the history of the Sikhs.

PANJ PYARAS

According to Dr. Sher Singh when mutual discussions, persuasions or understanding each other's points of views or difficulties did not help the assembly, the Sabha, the Sangat or the Panchayat to arrive at definite decision, then the 'five' were selected to give their decision after giving proper hearing and giving due thought. At Panthic meet even, when there was no concensus of opinion Panj Pyaras were selected to give judgement which was invariably and absolutely binding on the parties. In A.D. 1705 the Guru and his forty Sikhs put up stout resistance to the Mughal forces whose number was manifold than the Guru's soldiers. The Guru's ranks thinned and if the resistance had been continued, the Guru might have suffered grave consequences. At this juncture, the five Sikhs waited upon the Guru in the form of Panj Pyaras, and told him to leave the mud fortress of Chamkaur for some safe place. The Guru had to submit to the dictates of the Pyaras. As a mattar of fact by doing this, Guru Gobind Singh propounded the doctrine of collegial leadership in the direction of state policies. The collegiality of leadership means that all party matters are accomplished by all party members directly or through representatives who all are subject to the same rules.

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GURMATA

The decision of the Panth was called Gurmata—the decision taken in the presence of the Guru (after Guru Gobind Singh, Guru Granth Sahib). Some scholars have also given the name of Gurmata to annual assembly of leaders. The Gurmatas contained decisions about all religious, social and political matters. Since the decisions were taken in the presence of the Guru, and by the Panth Gurmata was the symbol and form of the supreme authority of the collective will of the people.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Having given the main features of the Sikhs polity as developed upto Guru Gobind Singh, we have reached the stage where it is not very difficult to judge the form of Government as envisaged by the Gurus.

Monarchical political structure does not fit in the Sikh polity and the concepts of the Gurus. When the Sikh religion was being evolved, there were the Hindu Monarchs as well as the Muslim Monarchs. The institution of the Hindu monarchy is very old. In the Rig Veda, the monarchy appears as the only and the normal form of government. In the Aitreya Brahmana supplement of the Rig, it is asserted that the law can never overpower lawlessness except through a monarch "The devas and asuras were at war ....and asuras were victorious, defeated the devas. The devas said it is on account of our having no king that asuras defeat us. Let us have a king. To this all agreed." Rig Vedic tradition accorded divine sanction, for, in the Manav Dharm Sastra, it is laid down that 'God Himself created the king to protect people from lawlessness.' Since the king ruled by divine right, he was a god, unamenable to the control or opinions of the people as far as the theory goes and therefore :

> "Even as infant king must not be despised,
> as though a mere mortal, for he is a great god in human form."

The king, to be formally invested with god-head must, however, be anointed, with the Abhiseka ceremony by the Brahmin priest, for an unanointed king is an unlawful king whom the gods do not favour. An unanointed king is a term of contempt in Hindu politics, and it is declared that such barbarous customs are the hall mark of dirty westerners and

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foreigners. According to Arthshastra of Kautalya 'a single wheel can not turn and so government is possible only with assistance.' In this way Arthshastra recommends that a king should appoint ministers and listen to their advice.

Elaborating the concept of the Hindu Monarchy Sardar Kapur Singh says, "This is the eternal triangle of Hindu monarchy, the god-king, the priestly Brahmins and the ministers by royal choice. Here is a king who has no legislative powers and whose function is to uphold the social structure of varanasram dharma as laid down in the Brahmanic sacred texts, whose formal installation is dependent upon the approval and goodwill of the hereditary priestly class of Brahmins, and who is constantly surrounded by a clique of ministers of his own creation, who tend to usurp powers and replace him. This Hindu polity ensures a static conservative society which abhors social progress and change as intrinsically undesirable and dangerous, for the Manavdharma Sastra bids a citizen 'to walk in that path of good and virtuous people which his father and grandfather followed; while he walks in that, he will not suffer harm.' It further ensures that this society is upheld by an autocratic king, who rules only by divine right but as a divine being, answerable to no mortal on earth, as far the theory goes. As a necessary consequence this form of government ensures the intellectual leadership of the Hindu society to the priestly Brahmans who are exhypothesis wedded to the varnasram dharma, the four-fold economico-political structure of the Hindu social pyramid.

Obviously the Hindu Monarchy as described above is alien to Sikh polity, according to which the ruler is divine in the sense it is a part of the Divine. He is not divine in the sense that he is infallible. Sovereignty does not reside in one man, rather it belongs to people as it emerges out of them. The Sikh polity does not recognise any exclusive priestly class to anoint the king. According to the Gurus, there can be no loyalty to supra-individual state if there is no rule of law or no permanent civil service. Moreover, the four-fold economico-political structure of the Hindu society have no place in the Sikh political schemes.

Islamic monarchy was also in no way, better than Hindu monarchy. In the Islamic monarchy as it existed in India contemporaneous of the Gurus the king assumes the status of the Mohammad's apostle instead of that of a god, though by no means less exalted, as is apparent from the claim, which the Mughal Emperors made for themselves, of being Zilli-Illahi, the shadow of God on earth. The laws of the static conservative

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society which he is required to uphold are derived from the Koran and the Hadith, instead of the Vedas and the Dharam-sastras, and the hereditary intellectual leadership of the Brahmans is replaced by the arrogant presumptions and prerogatives of the Ulemas. Likewise the Islamic monarch has his ministers selected and appointed by royal arbitration who are absolutely subservient to him.

Muslim type of monarchy also did not fit in the frame-work of the polity of the Sikh Gurus for those very reasons which did not qualify Hindu monarchy for the same.

The Gurus evolved a new form of government to which Guru Gobind Singh gave the name of 'Khalsa' Raj—Divine kingdom; through its five ones who happend to belong to five castes and five regions of India: Bhai Daya Singh, a Kashatariya, belonged to Punjab, Bhai Muhkam Singh, the washerman from Dwarka (U P.), Bhai Sahib Singh, a Brahman from the Deccan; Bhai Dharm Singh, a Jat from Haryana State, and Bhai Himmat Singh a waterman of Jagan Nath in the Eastern India. He thus, in a wonderful way, secured an inter-regional unity of India. He made all the representatives to eat from the same vessel and the Guru himself also ate from the same vessel. The attempt at inter-regional unity and inter-communal identity besides being a divine act was also a political weapon. The Guru was planning for the establishment of the Khalsa Commonwealth. Corresponding to these five regional representations, he also established five regional seats of authorities, for Eastern India, the throne of Patna, for the Deccan the throne at Nander – Hazur-Sahib, for the Panjab, the Akal Takht at Amritsar, for the hilly Himachal at Anandpur and for the southern Punjab in Takht Damdama Sahib. Five regions of India, five seats of authority, five representative beloved ones—thus wise the Guru wanted to establish the Republic of the Five.

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Chapter 15

SIKH SOCIAL IDEALS

A close study of the lives of the Gurus, their precepts and the Gurbani would lead us to the conclusion that the Sikh social ethics has four pronounced ingredients namely social equality, universal brotherhood, seeking good of all (altruism) and social service. These ingredients are inter-related and inter-act. Altruism and social service are, in fact, practical measures to realize universal-brotherhood, the actualisation of which in its turn, depends on the extent to which the principle of social equality is realized in the conduct of those who form the social fabric.

The concept of social equality is rooted in the belief that the whole matter is a unity and the moral world is that where this principle is crystallised in work-a-day life. The cravings for this unity became compulsive as it was baffled by the already established social institutions which did not aim at unification of mankind in terms of social equality. This being so, the Sikh Gurus had to comment upon the contemporary historical conditions prevalent in India and the problem of social equality had to be examined in the referential context of historical as also in terms of the social ideals. No wonder, the problem of social equality has been discussed and analysed vis-a-vis (i) the view of caste stratification, (ii) relations among economic classes, (iii) Preceptor-Disciple Relations, (iv) relations among men of different religions and nationalities, (v) relations between sexes in society, (vi) professions and occupations.

The social organisation of the Hindus, in terms of the castes, which is described by Sh. S. K. Maitra as the objective morality of the Hindus is completely rejected in Sikhism. "Complete equality among men is declared by the Sikh Gurus to be the fundamental moral principle required to regulate the social relations and communication." In Sikh scriptures, the *Rahit Namas* and in the utterances of the Gurus, one can trace the following flash-points which invalidate the caste philosophy and dismantle the social edifice built thereon.

There is no fundamental difference among men in terms of physical constitution. In a polemical discussion with the

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Brahmins Kabir enquires : "How are you Brahmin and I a low caste? Is it that I have blood in my veins and you have milk?"[1] Thus exposing the hollowness and absurdity of the superior claims of the so-called superior castes over inferior castes in terms of differences in physical constitution. There is another reference in Guru Granth Sahib which conveys that if the Brahmins are different from others why they did not appear in the world by means other than the biological process.

The second point of criticism against the caste system is on empirical ground, Guru Nanak points out that laws of nature do not react differently in respect of higher-caste men. God makes no discrimination in favour of those who call themselves twice-born and hence the myth of caste-superiority is clearly to be seen as man-made. Guru Nanak, vehemently contends 'what merit is the caste?' and he himself answers 'this is the real truth that he who lasteth the prison will die.'[2] This evidence is adduced by other Gurus also. Guru Amar Das regards caste as an abnormality, social perversity and unnecessary soul accretions. He points out with his characteristic argumentative vigour mixed with sweet flavour of his diction, 'Every one says, there are four castes but it is from God that everyone comes. The same is the clay which fashions the whole world; the same clay the potter moulds into vessels of all kinds. The five elements make up the body's firm, and who can say who has less of these or more?'[3]

The third point of criticism against the caste system is that men have emanated from the primorchial being. According to Guru Nanak, 'There is one God who is all light and from it has emanated the world. None is inferior to anyone. God of the Sikhs is self-extent—all hearts are illumined by the light of Lord.'[4] At another place in Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak declares, "You ought to see the light within all, and not look up for caste as the caste is of no consequence."

Sikhism does not harbour the belief that caste has been prevalent since the beginning. In the primordial state 'no men of caste or birth, high or low could be seen—there was no distinction of colour or coat or of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya.' The view that different parts of the Primordial Being gave rise to different castes has been repudiated by the Sikh Gurus, and Sikhism, in harmony with its universalism, refuses

1. *Guru Granth, Gaudi* Kabir ji, p. 324.
2. *Guru Graath Var Majh Slok* M. 1 (Paudi) p. 142.
3. *Beg Bhairon* M. 3 *Chapadas* (1 to 4-1) p. 1128.
4. *Sorath* M. I. p. 597.

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to accredit the caste institution in social ethics and its seers, on the basis of their direct intuitive experience deny God having favoured a few by bringing them out from the higher parts of His body.

Finally Sikhism holds that caste is of no consequence in respect of the realisation of the highest ideal. Men of the so-called low caste need not wait to be born again in the next higher caste for the attainment of liberation and spiritual realization. Not birth but deeds must determine the purity of life. Kabir declares, 'I am a weaver by caste but a patient in mind. And so I utter the Lord's praise in a state of utter-poise.' Guru Nanak, in order to bear witness to the vivacity of the statement identifies himself with "the lowest of the low, the humblest of the humble." Addressing himself to God he says, 'Thy mercy falls on the spots wherein the meek and the humble are cherished.' Speaking elsewhere on caste as the accepted channel of spiritual merit, the Guru expresses the view that not caste, which is only an accident of birth but deeds determine purity or merit. Sri Guru Nanak says :

"Caste is condemnable notion; pride of name is low and mean.

All beings have their sole support in God."

(page 83 Guru Granth Sahib)

Bhai Gurdas illustrates clearly the aforsaid stand-point of Sikhism in one of his compositions, he says "As the nature of the utensil has no bearing on the purity of the butter-fat, in the same way castes have no meaning for the holy men." He then enumerates the cases of those saints who were born in the so-called low castes and yet reached the highest stage of perfection. The type of slant in favour of the low castes is seen in the utterances of all the Gurus. Guru Nanak says :

"One who serves the higher castes is of great merit indeed.

But one who serves those of humble castes

He may indeed wear shoes made from my body.

(page 1256 Guru Granth Sahib)

There are numerous other pronouncements of the same nature, strongly repudiating all that the institution of caste had come to stand for.

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The tenth Guru subscribes to the writings of Guru Nanak and other Gurus and to all those saints or Bhatts whose compositions are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. Convinced of the invalidity of the caste system, he decries of the caste system and declares caste a taboo in the order of the Khalsa created and consolidated by him. Guru Gobind Singh says in categorical terms "There is no consideration of caste or membership of varnas. He is all sympathy for the low, the down-trodden and the low caste people." He hints out :

> "True service is the service of these people, I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes; charity will bear fruit, in this and the next world, if given to such worthy people as these. All other sacrifices and charities are profitless. From top to toe whatever I call my own, all I possess or carry I dedicate to these people."

The first five Sikhs baptised into the order of the Khalsa belonged to the so-called low-castes but were given, the enviable status of 'Piyaras'—the dearest of the dear. The theory of separate ideas for different castes was replaced by the same ethical and religious ethos for all men.

EQUALITY AMONG CLASSES IN SIKHISM

In the society contemporary to Nanak and other Sikh Gurus, wealth and rank were also the causes of its divisions as much as the birth as it was in the case of caste system, though the nature of the divisions in both the cases was different because in the former case the classification could not be rigid because wealth is concrete and separable whereas in the latter case, the classification based on birth which was an inseparable accident was rigid and inflexible.

Sikhism rejects the notion of superiority of the economically better placed class over the others. Bhai Gurdas while hailing the advent of Guru Nanak in this world exclaims that Nanak taught "Equality of a king and a commoner (Raja-runk Brabari)." The age-old superstitions that the poor are poor because of their past Karmas and hence poverty is ordained by God is repudiated in Sikhism, which avers that the higher classes are not governed by any separate code of ethics. The king and the poorest of the poor are governed by the same set of ethical and social rules and ideas. S. Kapur Singh in his

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book 'Baisakhi of the Sikhs' remarks, 'though men are not equal in ability, they are entitled to equal judgement and value and social equality.' The Gurus appear to presume that the notion of the superiority of man over man on the basis of wealth or rank is preposterous and arises when one forgets that one's life is rather short and death would level the so-called superioriy of the classes. Thus 'the ephemeral nature of human life is sought to be made the postulate of the declaration that any pride in the superiority of classes is futile.' The classification of the society on the basis of wealth or rank is also rejected in terms of the ultimate objective of Sikhism which is that one should be *Braham Gyani*—moral person—one who looks upon creation alike. Their moral is exemplified from an anecdote from Guru Nanak's biography.

Guru Nanak is reported to have refused the partaking of the Braham Bhoj of Malik Bhago in favour of the coarse food of Bhai Lalo. When asked by Malik for the reason Guru Nanak replied that he thought it prudent and advisable to have food with Bhai Lalo because he earned his livelihood through honest means and was bereft of any pride-sense while his methods of earning money were objectionable and he was filled with pride. In fact, the Guru wanted to impress upon the people that all ought to be treated as equals irrespective of the material. The superiority claimed on the basis of rank is also not recognized by the Sikh Gurus. In the vision which Guru Nanak brought to the people, contempt was cast on earthly potentates, whose power stemmed from aggression. The rule of God alone is eternal. "Thy kingdom is indestructable." (p. 567). As he sang in Sri Rag, no form of earthly glory, the splendour of royal power even, was worth-having as against devotion to God, the fountain of all true values. Earthly monarchs and chiefs, as he was expressed, in numerous contexts and with deep passion in the hymns Babar's invasions, rule as long as God is on their side—in other words, if they have some moral principle to sustain them. Virtue and truthfulness alone is the prop of power. 'Mighty things', says the Guru in the Jap, 'hold not the worth of a worm in whom is lodged the love of God.' And where dwells the love of God arrogance is automatically obliterated because if the human body is filled with ambrosia of love of God, no other thing can have any room in it.

EQUALITY IN TERMS OF PRECEPTOR-DISCIPLE RELATIONS

On March 30, A.D. 1699, on the Baisakhi day, the tenth Guru established the order of the Khalsa. After admini-

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stering 'Amrit' to the five Piyaras--dear ones, he himself partook of the same 'Amrit' which was administered by the five dear-ones to him, thereby affixing his seal to the dictum that the Guru was Guru and disciple both rolled in himself. In this way, Guru-disciple relationship was proclaimed to be based on equality.

EQUALITY IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AND NATIONALITIES

When Guru Nanak addressed himself to the task of shaping the society as per his conceptions, many religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism etc. were prevalent in the country. Religion as we understand, is an attempt to instill harmony among the people coupled with constructive dynamism to enable them to improve their living as also to understand the secrets of the creation vis-a-vis God and his human beings. All religions, in fact, at the time of their birth or rise reject the modus operandi as stated above, but as times passed on they fall victim to the parochialism of spirit or the narrow social political views of the people whom they profess to elevate. It was because of this that in Guru's times, the religious groups were at logger-heads with one another. The followers of Islam especially the Sunnis, were committed to safeguard the interests of their own group and they felt pleasure in torturing the votaries of other religious groups particularly the Hindus. The ideal of Darul-Harb is indicative of this fanatical attitude. The Hindus, in their turn, fared no better. They did not appreciate the good points of Islam and Islamic culture—rather they branded the Muslims as *Malechhas*—the demons. There were few persons both among the Hindus and Muslims known as Sufis and saints who understood the real role of religions but their number was slender and their voice was not heard in the din and noise of the communal clamour. If there were no riots on a large scale, it was either because of the passivity of the Hindus or out of their fear of imperial Muslims or because of the fact that Muslims were satisfied with what they had achieved. Christianity and other religions also did not prepare the psych so as to enable the people to appreciate and respect diverse religio-cultural paths. But the need of the people was the development of the attitude which might respect all religions and religious groups along with their social and cultural projections and ramifications. The profile of the response could be visualised in the teachings of the Bhaktas particularly of the 14th to 16th centuries but their expression was not forthright and their views were not categorical which being first attempts, could not be.

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It fell to Nanak to show the right path to the people lost in the vertex of religious squabbles and group ferocites. He preached openly that he believed in multi-national society. All religions have fundamental unity in the sense that they aimed at the regeneration of man and the harmonious relations between man and man. An ideal Muslim is not different from an ideal Hindu. Similarly an ideal Sikh is a Hindu, a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time. Nanak does not believe in the superstitious accretions of different religions and all those man-made postulates or practices which have defected man from the pathway to the harmony of mankind. Discussing about the merit of men professing different religions Guru Gobind Singh holds, 'One may be a Hindu or Muslim, all human beings belong to one brotherhood of mankind. In consonance with the spirit of ethical universalim, the tenth Guru proclaimed :

> "The Hindus and the Muslims are all one though they may have different habits under the influence of different environments. They are also campounded of the same four elements, earth, air, fire and water. The Quran and the Purana praise the same God. They are all of one form and one God had made them all." (Akal Ustat)

These categorical and unambiguous remarks leave no doubt that men of all nationalities and religions are equal. Bhai Gurdas very amply remarks, "There are in the world many Sunnis, Christians, Musais, Rafzis and those who have no faith in doomsday. Numberless are the Ferangis, Armenians, Romans, Africans, Sayyads, Turks, Mughals and Pathans. But whatever and wherever they may be, their merit and demerit cannot remain undiscovered."[1] According to Dr. Avtar Singh, "The attempt is thus made to transcend the creed labels and the geographical considerations to assert the fundamental equality in terms of the ethical perfection. The learned writer of the Prem Sumarg says, "When someone belonging to other religions and names comes to the house of Sikh, it is his duty to accord full respect and cordiality as this would make a Sikh perfect."[2]

From this and the utterances of the Gurus cited above it is only reasonable to conclude that religious bitterness and strife according to these injunctions are, therefore, far from the social ideal of equality. According to Kapur Singh, "Sikhism fully recognises that the search for a fundamental unity of

1. Bhai Gurdas *Vars* Stanza 16 var 8.
2. Prem Sumarg ed. Kahan Singh; Gurmat Sudhakar, Para 835.

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religions or the attempts at the religious rapprochment have their limitation, for there are fundamental differences in the conceptions of reality and attitudes towards the world, permanently impeding a real and lasting synthesis between basically incompatible elements, preaches frank and unreserved dialogue between various religions and the human groups that owe allegiance to these religions so as to arrive at the experience that transcends religious particularism and realizes a base of identity underneath all modes of religious expression. As a corollary thereof Sikhism favours a plural, free, open and progressive human society. God oriented, non-aggressive but firm and ever-ready to combat rise and growth of evil through organised resistance and forwarding yet non-ambitious."

EQUALITY IN TERMS OF SEXES

Status of Woman

In Sikhism the issue of the status of woman has been tackled from many angles. Scriptural support has been extended in favour of woman that she is not at all inferior to man. Guru Nanak says, "From the woman is our birth, in the woman's womb, we are shaped. To the woman are we engaged and to the woman are we wedded. Woman is our friend and from woman is the family. If one woman dies, we seek another, the women are the bonds of the world. Why call woman evil who gives birth to kings. From the woman is the woman, without the woman there is none." Again he says :

> "That it is God and God the creator alone who is independent of woman because he is un-born. Verily, society, the home and the country where there is a true woman of divine virtues, are honoured, and become dignified and exalted in the Durbar of the True One."

From this scriptural authority, it is clear that woman was assigned the status, in no way, inferior to man. In fact home, society and the country are honoured only if woman is held in esteem.

The Gurus in their compositions address themselves as woman in relation to God. God Himself acts as a woman. Metaphysical argument is also harnessed to impress upon the people that woman occupies equal status to man. It is held that since all mankind is emanation of God, it is only ridiculous to deny equality to woman. Guru Arjun says :

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'Thou art my father thou art my mother', he does not make use of Mata—Mother—in feminine gender, thereby pointing that physical differences also have no meaning in determining the status of woman.

Against the background of spiritual-cum-metaphysical thought vis-a-vis woman as detailed above, the Gurus discussed further the status of woman. The Gurus do not regard 'woman' as hurdle or obstruction on the path to the ultimate goal of Eternal Bliss. This being so, they reject asceticism or renunciation as the requisite pathway and regard house-holder's life if it is led in a righteous manner superior to that of an ascetic and is not contradictory to the moral order the Gurus wanted to establish in this world. In fact, the moral order means nothing if it is not to be realised in this world. To regard woman a 'temptress' or 'seductress' or 'unclean' is preposterous in the eyes of the Gurus. The Guru by bringing this type of vision to the people expects that she would be given honourable status in every social segment of the society.

Family being the smallest but the most important social unit was sure to draw the attention of the Gurus. A close study of the utterances of the Gurus would show that the Guru recognised this institution as the most fundamental salient of our social structure but the Guru wanted a change in its conceptual structure and in the relations between different members of the family. The Gurus never viewed this institution either as patriarchal unit or matriarchal unit because they rejected the supreme authority of the oldest male member or the oldest female member in a family. They, on the other hand, wanted harmonious relations among the members of the family on equal footing.

In their views, the principle of division of work and responsibilities should form the basis of relationship among different members of the family, and it should be recognised that family, being one integrated whole, its each member is as important as the other. Father is father if he performs the duty of a father, and mother is mother if she functions as a mother. From the point of procreation either sex is equal, and in fact, it is the co-operative combined effort of both the sexes that procreation takes place, and in no case, either sex, individually or conjointly with the opposite sex can create anything which is the miracle of God alone. In this context, Guru Nanak in prayerful mood designates God both as mother and father and to make himself more clear addresses God as mother in the same gender as he does when he addresses God as father. The Gurus regard porgeny of the pair as brothers

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and sisters and wish that they function as such. But certainly they do not recognise the superiority of the one over the other. They should function as the important adjuncts of the family under the guidance of the superior talent of their parents but not as a slave of the family. From this point of view, the Gurus condemn all these parents who are not considerate to the susceptibilities of their wards and wittingly or unwittingly force them to conform to their whims and views. Really this tendency of the parents impedes the growth of creative harmony in the family which instead of becoming the vehicle of progress retards it.

The institution of family is very closely knit with the marriage which, to a great extent, is the fulcrum of family as also its adhesive. This is why at all places where people began to make conscious efforts to grow as a civilized groups, marriage was considered to be sacrament. Indians were no exception to it. Sikhism also recognises the fact and regards marriage very sacred. It is solemnised in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and the four hymns from Guru Granth Sahib (Lawan) are recited on this occasion, the purpose being that marriage is an act of benediction and something hallowed and divine. It is really an irony of history that bridegrooms regard themselves superior to their brides, and do not feel abashed at their demands of dowry and other things. The Gurus have condemned this attitude of the males and have regarded both of them two sparks of the same light (ਏਕ ਜੋਤ ਦੋਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ). The variegated customs which have grown round marriage are meaningless accretions and have no spiritual or social function. Sex, of course is the natural basis of husband-wife relationship but to treat sexual gratification the chief object of marriage is to reduce oneself to animal level. The Guru says that the marriage should not be a union of bodies. If it is so, then this union may break at any level. Bodies go on changing and the effect of the passage of time results in the deterioration of physical beauty and physical appearance. Devotion to sensuality and sexuality will, in course of time, lead to mutual contempt and discontent. Therefore the Guru says that marriage instead of being a union of bodies should be a union of souls, of minds, leading to love of each other's qualities and care for each other's well-being (War Maru III). It is only in this context which is at once moral and spiritual that marriage ceremony has been called 'Anand'. By calling marriage Anand the Guru conceived in this unit of society a partial realisation of God, as in the establishment of the Khalsa he had conceived a total realisation of the Supreme Being. All the social units in the Khalsa order are really the evolutionary stages of the manifestation of God, of the Sargonisation of the Nirguna, of the actualisation of the

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possible of the potential. The first step and a fast step is the intimately fastened tie of man and woman in marriage. We saw that God manifested in this universe through the principle of His will which appeared in opposites: Haumai and Nam-individuation and universalisation. This bi-polar nature of reality continues till we reach the moral man as the highest achievement. The combination of man and woman in the highest moral order is the unity of bipolarity, the first achievement of ultimate Anand. Mating is a universal characteristic but mating in the moral order is possible only in man. Hence Anand. This marriage has a metaphysical moral and spiritual basis.

It is against this background, the Gurus rejected polygamy. Social argument has also been adduced by the Gurus in favour of their views. The polygamous or polyandrous marriages would run counter to the spirit of equality between the sexes. Only monogamous marriages fit in the conceptual and operational framework of the institution of family.

In view of all this, the status of woman, in Sikh family is as respectable as that of man.

The practice of female infanticide has been denounced in Sikhism as it negates the ethical norms, spiritual and social equality of human beings. The origin of this practice has been traced to various causes. A scholar suggests that 'in Rome, Greece, Arabia, India and China, women of the upper classes, relieved by the males of the harder tasks of both as an effort to keep them young and as a sign of rank became an economic burden and consequently infanticide fell mainly on the females. It is also held that the necessity of finding a dowry for daughters contributed to the selection of female children for infanticide in China and India. Furthermore, the origin of this custom is traced to the Ancestor Cults.

According to A.M. Hocard "The ancestor cults in Greece, Rome, India and China could be transmitted only through the males and this also resulted in the destruction of girl infants."

Obviously, all the causes itemised above have either originated in the perversion of human mind or in the appropriation of privileges by males or in the deep-rooted superstitions. The Gurus do not give credence to any of the causes and aver that infanticide is immoral and hence undesirable. Guru Gobind Singh in one of his fiats to the Khalsa made it an unpardonable sin and enjoined upon his followers not to regard

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the persons indulging in it as a Sikh. In *Rehat Nama* by Prahlad Singh it is stated "He who is a Sikh and deals with one indulging in female infanticide would be led to disaster ultimately." In another formulary, it is said "Sikhs should not entertain even in the relationship with those indulging in female infanticide." (Rehat Nama by Desa Singh).

Various steps on mandane level were also suggested to eradicate this evil. In order to overcome the difficulty in terms of the requirement of dowry to be offered by the bride's father, it is laid down in Sikhism, that 'no dowry ought to be accepted from the bride's parents' and in arranging her marriage, social help is required to be offered to the parents of the girl who may experience difficulty in finding matches for their children. It is laid down that if there is some difficulty in some one's marriage, then Sikhs ought to make efforts and take pains to arrange it in their own family or persuade others for the same. By calling a woman who immolates herself on the pyre of her husband 'Satti' is like administering anesthesia to make her insensitive to lurid torture she is subjected to.

Status of Woman in terms of the Custom of Satti

Satti whose literal meaning is chaste denotes a custom of immolation on the part of women alongwith the dead bodies of their husbands. The practice is horrible but it was there in India when Sikhism emerged. What were the causes of its rise and prevalence and what social purpose did it serve, little is known. However, it appears that the custom was the outcome of the vagaries of emotion, the working of the mind of the males, conscious or unconscious level, to preserve their superiority and privileges and the restrictive social atmosphere in respect of women. It did not serve any social purpose in positive or progressive sense.

Even the scriptual authority was appropriated to scaffold the contention that self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband was the only meritorious course that a virtuous woman could follow. "Not only would Satti enjoy eternal bliss in heaven along with her husband but her action would expiate the sins of three generations of her hunsband's family both on his father's and mother's sides." Thus the element of hope and encouragement were used to induce women for self-immolation to obtain the posthumous title of the virtuous woman. (Satti)

The Sikh Gurus did not approve of the practice. Guru Amar Das declares that "Satti is one who lives contented and

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embellishes herself with good conduct and cherishes the Lord ever and calls on Him." Since the advice of the Guru is for all, it is only reasonable to arrive at the conclusion that the Guru required widows to conduct themselves as all others do. According to Dr. Avtar Singh,[1] "The view is expressed by the Guru that in order to be known as virtuous, woman ought to maintain families knit by love. The separation on death also should be a matter of feelings. On the whole, according to the Guru, the virtues of the housewife are to be in terms of her role in the family and not in terms of self-immolation." The Guru says, "The women burn themselves on the pyres of their husbands; but if they love their spouses well, they suffer the pangs of separation even otherwise."[2]

The Guru, not only have indulged in moral and spiritual dilectics to reject the immoral custom of Satti but have suggested practical steps to eradicate this evil. Giani Lal Singh quotes Gaudi of the Guru Nanak from the Adi Granth in this connection. It is pointed out by him that the widow ought to have the right to exercise her option for re-marriage whenever she wants it exactly as the males have been allowed to do.

In social sphere, in Sikhism no restriction have been put on woman, she has been considered equal to man in all respects. The Gurus' view of society is neither male-dominated nor female-dominated, it is a universal brotherhood of man based on social equality rooted in the dignity of labour and saturated with *nam*, the divine spirit. The society of this concept is obviously free from taboos and prejudices born out of sex. Any restriction on women is not only unethical but runs contrary to the Sikh principles. Guru Nanak while commenting upon the causes of the degeneration of Indian society in the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth centuries deplores that "woman had become coward and wretched." By implication he meant that women should rid themselves of the role they had been constrained to play. They should participate, as equal partner of man, in the drama of life. Woman can adopt any profession and there should be no bar on her in this respect. Guru Nanak's wife took leading part in the activities connected with the free kitchen. Mata Khivi the wife of Guru Angad controlled the donations to the kitchen (Guru ka Langar). During Guru Amar Das, several ladies were appointed to head the bishoprics (Manjis). Bibi Bhani's role in the development of Sikhism is too well-known to need any introduction. The part played by Mata Gujri following the death of her husband will go down in

1. Dr. Avtar Singh : Ethics of the Sikhs, p. 181.
2. *Adi Grant Var* of *Rag Suhi* Sloka M. 3 (3-6) p. 787.

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history as the evershining beacon of courage. The order of the Khalsa as inaugurated by the tenth Guru also makes no distinction between male and female and in fact anyone entering this order was named Khalsa, no separate name was assigned to woman seeking entry to this order. Guru Gobind Singh, in his struggle for Dharma, did not regard woman in any way inferior to man. Sahib Devan, and Mai Bhago took part in political as well as religious affairs and their example was followed later on, with the zeal born of a regenerated process as initiated by the Gurus.

All these ladies proved beyond doubt that women, if allowed to play their role in society can show their worth, in no way less than men. The Gurus in view of all this, denounced the Pardah System that had plagued the society since long. It is laid down in Rahat Namas that women ought not to wear veils Whatever be the historical reasons for the practice, it being emblematic restriction of the bondage of women and denial of equality to them has not been accredited in Sikhism. They should not experience any inequality in matters of education rather they should be free to attain education, unhampered by any crippling taboos. They should be free to learn language, literature, religious scriptures, music and science. Woman should not be confined within the four walls. She should not be treated as an island sequestered from man. She, being as much a part of God as man, has the inherent capacity and capability to contribute to the general society as men have. The Gurus, therefore, advocate forcefully that women are equal partners of men in their struggle to discover truth and realise it in the world to enable it to conform to the moral order as the Gurus perceived and preached. Women should be treated as integrated human beings and not the weaker vessel—the inferior sex which is wrapped in hypocritical phrases like the 'fair sex'.

SOCIAL EQAULITY VIS-A-VIS PROFESSIONS OR OCCUPATIONS

In Sikhism one can adopt any profession—farming, trading and so-called menial profession. His love for us is not wanting provided that we are truthful and honest. In Nanak's view, it is tantamount to committing sins if we look down upon those persons who have adopted the professions of sweepers and scavengers etc. The master says, "There is no intrinsic merit in professions. All are alike." Guru Arjan enjoins upon us :—

"Thou mayest do any work
But it must be done in a righteous manner

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Thou must not earn by living through corrupt means
Thou must not claim what belongs to you not
Let such rightful earning be shared with the children of God
Thus wise will thy life become pure."

The Gurus do not consider it to be correct that 'Karma' activity, leads to the bondage of 'Jiva'. According to Indian concept of metaphysics, God, in his true and real form is 'Nirgun Braham' who is Satya-chit-Anand and is actionless. When Nirankar willed He became manifest (Sargun). It was willing or acting which brought formless God into form and shape. Jiva was also created in the same process. If 'Jiva' wants to merge into the Satya-chit-Anand Braham, it must also become Akrai (Actionless). Hence started the school of thought which pleaded resignation from the field of activity in order to become 'Akrai' because the belief was that every act of man leaves behind its 'Sanskara'—impressions or traces which remain attached to 'Jiva' and determine its births and rebirths. The Guru defines the theory of Karma. According to Nanak 'Karma theory does not operate in a mechanical way. Jiva can be made to realise that it is micro-cosm of macro-cosm. It should not worry about the success and failure of its actions. Every activity is God's activity and every success or failure is His. He can, through efforts, transcend self and liberates himself from the chain of Sanskaras. The liberated soul is always in tune with the ultimate reality.' In Granthic hymns, this stage is known as the stage of Nam.

Thus a true Sikh works because that is the way of His worship. The more he works honestly the more he worships. A hard and honest work takes him into the presence of God where he finds God's will all round. Working for others is better because in this case, you rise above the narrow limits of self. Hence the social inequality on the basis of work or professions has no meaning.

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

The ideal of social equality is not the ultimate aim of the ethics of Sikhism. The equality may be maintained without feeling any affection or regard for the person who is held to be equal but such bare equality would not be enough because it does not conform to the ideal humanistic morality. Hence it is essential that it must be saturated with idea of spiritual unity of mankind. Thus the material content to the social ethics in Sikhism is provided from the same premise of spiritual unity which was used for pointing up human equality. Guru Gobind

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Singh's ideas in this regard are very expressive. He says, "As out of a single fire millions of spark arise, arise in separation but come together again when they fall back in the fire. As from a heap of dust, grains of dust swept up fill the air, and filling it fall in a heap of dust. As out of single stream countless waves rise up, and being water, fall back in the water again. So from God's form emerge alive and inanimate things and since they arise from Him, they shall fall in Him again." The Guru in this statement asserts that everyone ought to treat everyone as member of the same human brotherhood. To lend support to this idea, Guru Arjan says, "Thou art our only father, we are all thy children." The same Guru is much pained at the attitude of 'otherness' on the part of people and he says, "Meeting with the Guru I have abandoned the sense of the other." In fact the Guru equates the meeting of the Guru with the demolition of the walls of the instinct of 'otherness'. The 'other' is not an 'other' but a co-sharer of the same source of emanation and a part of the same spiritual order. The universal brotherhood is thus linked together by bonds deeper than family or national affirmities. According to Professor Avtar Singh, "The argument of the Guru seems to be that brotherhood is a reality but it is not visible because of the pall of ego or haumai (individuation). Once this partitioning pall is removed, the relationship should be visible clearly. As a matter of fact, the whole of social ethics of the Sikhs is oriented towards the demolition of this wall of separation, and the realisation of order and still wider identification is indicative of the progressive realization of the ideal.

The greatest hinderances to the realization of the ideal of universal brotherhood are slander and enmity. So far slander is concerned, the Gurus are profuse in their utterances against this evil. The Gurus regard 'Nindak' as the person who does not find peace here and hereafter.[1] 'Slandering others amounts to putting their filth into ones own mouth.'[2] Slanderer's fate is sealed for ever[3] and he can never earn respect.[4] Slanderer friends are also undone, because he is considered 'a useless person for the people and is condemned to eternal bondage.'[5] He cannot earn spiritual merit even if he pays visit to sixty

1. ASA 5, 4-10, 373.
2. ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਪਰ ਮਲੁ ਮੁਖ ਸੁਧੀ ਅਗਨਿ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਚੰਡਾਲੁ ।
3. ਜਨ ਕਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੋਆ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਭਾਗੇ ਹਾਰਿ ।
4. ਨਿੰਦਕ ਕਾ ਮੁਖ ਕਾਲਾ ਹੋਆ, ਦੀਨ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਕੇ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ।
5. ਆਸਾ 5—page 373 ।

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sacred places of pilgrimage.[1] He is given no place in the presence of True Lord.[2]

Slander, therefore, has been condemned both on spiritual as well as on social grounds. This evil causes mutual distrust and suspicion among the smaller social groups but may also poison the social relations among much larger groups such as different relations. Social value of the slanderer is negative as he is not considered trustworthy. He is, in fact, a sick member of the society. In one of Guru Arjan Dev's hymns, this negative role of slander is very beautifully crystalised. He says, "I have abandoned the companionship of ego and now the friend and the foe are alike to me."[3] Viewed from this point of view, the conduct of slanderer is immoral and anti-social and definitely a great hurdle on the way to the universal brotherhood.

The second great hurdle on the way to the realization of the goal of universal brotherhood is the 'enmity' towards others. Enmity is the desire to cause harm and pain to others. Guru Arjan Sahib says, "Why to entertain enmity, God pervades everywhere." "It is the duty of everyone that the feeling of enmity should be eradicated." These utterances of the Guru lead us to the conclusion that enmity hinders the spiritual growth and does not allow one to realise God who pervades everywhere. Bhai Gurdas discusses this evil on social level. He says. "It is common practice that men return good for good done unto them, but I am sacrifice unto those who return good even for evil or who are good and kind even to the evil doers." Thus persons are required not to retaliate to evil with evil but to return it with good. Only thus can a fellow being turned into enemy be won over. Even when evil has to be fought, it is to be done without any feeling of enmity towards the other person. "Love of one's enemy provides the acid test of whether one's love is a perfect love like God's or is restricted to those whom it is easy to love." Evil must be resisted without saturating one's self with a feeling of hatred for the evil doers. This type of attitude would help the realisation of the goal referred to above. Bhai Nand Lal says "if any man is injured it is the creator who would be injured. The creator is the soul and life of creation." One ought, therefore, to eradicate completely any feeling of enmity and also guard against its development at any stage in life.

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1. ਗੌਡ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ p. 875 ।
2. ਮੁੰਹ ਕਾਲੇ ਤਿਨਾ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਜਿ ।
   ਸਚੈ ਦਰਬਾਰ P. 649 of Guru Granth Sahib.
3. ਪ੍ਰਥਮੇ ਛੋਡੀ ਪਰਾਈ ਨਿੰਦਾ
   ਉਤਰ ਗਈ ਸਭ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਚਿੰਦਾ (ਭੈਰਉ 5 4-27 p. 1147)

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SERVICE—ALTRUISM

CONSIDERING THE WELFARE AND HAPPINESS OF OTHERS

In Sikhism, another social ideal is the welfare and happiness of others. This ideal in the modern parleys is known as Altruism. The Gurus aver that the eradication of desires of enmity and slander is not sought for the complete realization of human brotherhood, it must be realised positively by altruistic activities. And in fact this thing has been made as the test in terms of which a person professing Sikhism is evaluated. Bhai Gurdas says, "The test of good man is that he seeks always the welfare of others. The bad man is selfish, he does not do good to others."[1] There are hazards of altruism as well. It sometimes degenerates itself into a sort of social pity, at times it gives rise to pride which is an evil in itself. In view of all this, the altruist is required to regard his altruism as an opportunity for receiving divine sanctification since the creator is there in creation. It was against the background of this type of altruism, that the Gurus and Sikhs made supreme sacrifices. The Gurus stress on par-upkārs (service of others) the cordinal virtue, and true to this spirit, the compilers of Sikh moral codes enjoin upon the Sikhs. "When the food is ready, pray for some needy person to come and share your food so that your food may be sanctified." Bhai Chopa Singh, in consonance with this strain, requires the Sikhs to consider help to the needy as 'rendition unto the Guru'[2] and decries the hoarding of one's possessions while his fellow-beings may be in great distress. Guru Hargobind calls the mouth of the poor and needy as the safe of the Guru, and scolded the Sikh in possession of honey (which he wanted to offer to the Guru) for not giving to his fellow-being who suffered a sudden attack of asthma and needed honey for cure. Altruism is, indeed, the holiest spark in the life of human soul. Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Nand Lal also express similar views when they come to discuss the attributes of the 'par-upkār' (Service unto others).

Bhai Mani Singh, in his book 'Bhakta Ratnavali' divides the 'Gurmukh—Par-upkari Jiv' into three categories, as he divides the evil person into three categories. The sine-qua-non is altruism. The three levels of par-upkari jiv are (i) Gurmukh (ii) Gurmukhtar (iii) Gurmukhtam. Gurmukh is "he who does good unto those who do good unto him and returns evil for evil." Gurmukhtar is "one who has turned his back to

1. Bhai Gurdas *Vars* stanza 12 *var* 20.
2. Chopa Singh : Rahat Nama.

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evil deeds and his face is towards the teachings of the Guru. If some one does even a single act of goodness unto him, the Gurmukhtar would always do good to him. He never takes pride for the good he does unto others." Gurmukhtam is "the finest specimen of altruism. He seeks good of others even if they seek his evil. His altruism is spontaneous without any discrimination of friend or foe."

Of the three categories of the evil persons the first is of the manmukhs who does not remember the good done to him but never forgets the evil done to him. Manmukhtar forms the second category of evil persons. They are, in the moral scale, lower than the manmukhs. They always return evil in return both for the good as well as the evil done to them. In the third category come the manmukhtam, the persons who always return evil for any act of good done to them. They have no faith in the spiritual word. They invariably would argue that the spiritual word and the good of others is not fruitful for them, while the evil done by them to others leads to their own good. Such persons are perenially condemned ones.[1]

From the evidence of Bhai Mani Singh it is also clear that altruism is the quality much-loved by the Guru. To lend another dimension to this virtue the Gurus say that persons saturated with altruism help others, achieve salvation. In this context, Gurmukhtam plays the role of Bodhistava, and leads countless beings to Nirvana. In the words of Guru Nanak, "Nanak te Mukh Ujjale Keti Chhuti Nāl" testifies to the aforesaid role of Gurmuktar. Guru Angad puts his seal to this view when he repeats the words of Nanak with solitary addition of the 'Hor'.[2]

SOCIAL SERVICE

Likewise altruism social service is regarded as another positive step towards the realisation of human brotherhood. In fact it is something that breeds altruism and through which altruism is expressed. This being so, it is accorded central place in the social ethics of the Sikhs. Moreover, social service is closely connected with mystic contemplation and according to Guru Nanak, one of the most important effects of devotion and contemplation lies in the attitude of a person towards social service. He says, "When one dwells on the Guru's word, one's

1. Bhai Kahan Singh, Gurmat Sudhakar, para, 673.
2. *Nanak te Mukh Ujjale Hor Keti Chhuti Nal.*

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mind flows out to serve others and one practises contemplation and self-control by overpowering ego. Rendering social service has also been considered an attribute of God. This is why that the Gurus accord highest respect to the persons engaged in serving the needy. Bhai Gurdas says, "Sacrifice I am unto that person who sacrifices for others. Sacrifice I am unto one who is happy by serving others."[1] According to the Gurus the person doing social service is entitled to the seat nearest to God.

Different forms of social service are recorded in Sikh scriptures and religious literature. It may be in providing requisite material by rendering physical service or by reading out scriptures for the solace of the people. Service according to Guru Gobind Singh ought to be more for the help of the oppressed. He says, "I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes, charity will bear fruit in this and the next world if given to such worthy people as these common people."

In Sikh scriptures, great importance is given to service of the Guru and the service of God. A question may be asked as to who this Guru or God is whose service has been stressed so often in Sikhism. The question at first sight seems baffling, but it will not pose any problem if we are acquainted with the concept of Guru in Sikhism. The Guru in Sikhism is not any particular living Guru, but it is held that True Guru's word is the soul of the Guru and the holy congregation is the body of the Guru. Obviously the service of the congregation is called the service of the Guru.

Similarly by service of God we mean service of people. The answer is furnished by Guru Arjan Dev when he says "God is intertwined with the servant as the warp with the woof. He sustains his servants, and gives them peace. I bring water for his servants, fan them and grind their corn, for this also is the service of God."[2] In this striking passage, the Guru is clear that service of people may be taken as service of God.

Service to be a real service, must be rendered without any expectation of reward. In case any reward is solicited in return for it, it is termed as bargain. Guru Arjan Dev says, "He who serves without desire for rewards, he alone attains to God." But still a reward is offered in Sikhism which is outside or beyond the act of service. It may be argued that as the spiritual is not completely away and different from the persons,

1. Bhai Gurdas : *Var* stanza 5, *Var* 12.
2. *Adi Granth*, p. 101.

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the act of service to fellowbeings is in itself the act of realization of the spiritual without involving any desire for the external reward.

Another question pertaining to 'service' is : Should a person cease to serve others after he has realised the goal? The answer to this question in Sikhism is the negative. Bhai Gurdas says, "Gur Sikh once seized by the thought of social service continues it till the end of life."[1] Seva Das, the author of *Asawarian* quoting from Kabir holds that one ought to serve till the creator is there, that is till there is the world of existence. Just as the creator is not exhausted in providing for others, similarly one ought not to tire of serving.[2]

1. Bhai Gurdas : *Var* stanza 20 *Var* 14.
2. Sewa Ram: *Asawarian*, p, 96.

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Chapter 16

TWO SIKH RELIGIOUS ORDERS : SEWA PANTH AND NIRMAL PANTH

SEWA PANTH

The Sikh Gurus were humanist par excellence. They had put man in centre and endeavoured hard to bring him solace and salvation. They not only tried to uplift man on religious plane but also endeavoured to improve the lot of man on political plane. Guru Gobind Singh addressed himself to man 'qua man' without the narrow distinctions and antagonisms of east and west, Hindu and Muslim, Masjid and Mandir. The west was not so prominent a factor of influence in India during the 17th century, yet the writings and teachings of the Guru resounded with international humanitarian overtones. That there is no difference between man and man is clearly portrayed by the tenth Guru in the following words:—

One man by shaving his head to become a holy monk
Another sets up as a yogi or some other kind of ascetic
Some call themselves Hindus: other call themselves Musalmans
Among these are the Shiahs, they are sunnis also
And yet man is of one race in all the world.
God as creator and God as good
God in His Bounty and God in His Mercy
Is all one God. Even in our errors we should not separate God from God
Worship the one God, for all men the one Divine Teacher
All men have the same form
All men have the same soul.

The discrimination between man and man is altogether excluded and the central theme of all activities should be welfare and upliftment of the man.

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This theme of the Gurus, on operational plane, found expressions in the Gurus' wars, their literary compositions and their actions. It also found its expression in the activities of the order of the Seva Panthis—followers of Path of Service whose sole aim is to see to the welfare of human beings without cherishing any desire for fruit or reward in the mundane sense. They were in fact motivated by purely altruistic impulses.

The founder of this order was Bhai Ghaniya, who belonged to Sodra, a village in Gujranwala district and was Dhamman[1] Kashatri. Since his childhood, he had religious propensies and showed signs of transcending narrow-mindedness and egocentricity. When he was ten years old, he happened to go to Anandpur along with his father, and was much impressed by the towering personality of the ninth Guru. He again went to Anandpur at the age of sixteen. This time he felt so much attached with the Guru's mission that he decided to pass his life in serving the Guru, and for the Guru's cause. He was handsome, well-built and intelligent. His parents wanted him to marry but he chose to work for the Guru's cause which, in fact, was no other than the people's cause. In spite of the best efforts of his parents, he refused to marry not because he did not believe in this institution, but because he did not want to give divided attention to his mission.

All records show that Bhai ji engrossed himself in rendering service to the Guru, individuals and the people in general. He felt pleasure in rinsing utensils, cleansing campus of Guru ka Langar (Guru's kitchen), bringing water for the kitchen as well as for the thirsty travellers. He slept very little, hardly four hours at night. All the time his attention was fixed on the Great God and his creations. He would spare not even a second without doing something for the people. Bhai ji enjoyed the sweet utterances of the ninth Guru, was elevated by his hallowed darshan and was transported to eternal Bliss by his instructions. He was lucky enough to accompany Guru Tegh Bahadur in his eastern tours. He drank deep at the fountain of Gurbani. He very unassumingly but steadily served the people irrespective of their beliefs and group affiliations.

His dress used to be made of home-spun coarse cloth, expressive of his simplicity and honest living. He was extremely humble and, as a matter of fact, humility was his root tendency. Sometimes when Guru Tegh Bahadur out of amusement told

1. Dhamman is a sub-caste of Kashatriyas.

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him that people had lodged complaints against him, he would at once say—

"We are stained by the sins which are numerous; only God can purify us."

Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed under oders of Aurangzeb on the 11th November, 1676. Bhai Ghaniya suffered a mental shock at the gruesome execution and could recover only after some time.

As time rolled by, Bhai ji's zeal for sewa (service) redoubled. Day in and day out, he was busy with assuaging the afflicted, dressing the wounds, providing water to the thirsty and comforting the comfortless. Service had become the reeling passion of his life. Bhai ji participated in his own humble way in all the activities of Guru Gobind Singh. He watched for himself the hostility of Hill Chiefs and its implications, and the attitude of the Mughal Government vis-a-vis the Sikhs and their Guru Gobind Singh.

In A.D. 1704 the battle of Anandpur ensued. The enemy forces consisted of the armies of Hill States, of Srihind and of irregulars such as Ranghars and Gujjars. The Guru had also collected nearly ten thousand men. Although this number was insignificant as compared to the strength of the enemy, yet on the Guru's side there was will of the people to fight and die for their Master.

The actual warfare started on May 20, 1704. The Sikhs fought valiently with the result that the enemy's hope for having easy victory was dashed to the ground.

One day complaints were made to the Guru that a Sikh, Ghaniya by name, had been serving water and rendering first aid not only to the Sikhs but to the wounded enemy. The Guru called Ghaniya and enquired if it was true. The humble Ghaniya replied that he had been serving those who fell in the battlefield. "My eyes could not distinguish between Sikhs and Mughals, as I saw Guru's face in everyone". The Guru appreciated him and remarked that he had really understood his mission. As a mark of approval of his action, the Guru gave him a box of ointment with the mark that he should not serve water alone to the wounded in the battle-field but also ointment to the wounded to ensure their speedy recovery. According to Bhai Kahan Singh the Guru, as a token of his pleasure for his humanistic work, gave him a bed and a handkerchief.

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The gifts from the Guru inspired him all the more and he collected round himself a band of the Sikhs, ever prepared to put in service for the people. Guru Gobind Singh evacuated Anandpur on the night of 5-6 December, 1705. The enemy forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit immediately. Realising the impending danger, Guru Gobind Singh gave a band of 50 men to Bhai Udai Singh and charged him with the responsibility of checking the enemy's advancement. Bhai Udai Singh fought a bloody battle at Shahi Tibbi with the enemy with a handful of his men; all of them perished fighting covering themselves with imperishable glory.

When the battle of Shahi Tibbi was being fought, Guru Gobind Singh along with his men had reached the bank of the Sarsa River. It was now almost the day-break. About this time, the enemy forces mustered themselves to attack the Guru. The Guru ordered Jiwan Singh, a Ranghretta Sikh, to encounter the pursuers and himself with the rest of the people plunged into the flooded Sarsa River. There was confusion all around. Many persons were swept to death by the fast moving water and many more were scattered. Bhai Ghaniya also lost track of the Guru. He moved about in the Malwa region of the Panjab till he reached some place near Jagraon. A Bairagi Sadhu who met him there told him the whereabouts of his Guru. Bhai ji felt overjoyed and lost no time in reaching Talwandi Saboki where the Guru gave him an affectionate pat and told him to devote exclusively to the dissemination of Sikh tenets. Bhai ji stayed for some time with the Guru, but when the Guru moved to the Deccan, he, along with his associates, undertook tours in different parts of the Panjab, acquainting the people with the Guru's faith and putting in service for the benefit of the people. He could persuade the people to put in joint effort to alleviate their difficulties. He could inspire them to sink wells or to dig tanks to overcome the need of water. He, on his part, would march with vessels full of water laden on both sides of the hump of a string of camels so that he might provide relief to the areas suffering from the shortage of water. He would also provide spiritual balm to the tension-ridden minds of the people.

He established various temples, then known as Dharam-shalas where he made arrangements for the propagation of Guru's views and philosophy. Having done a lot of work in Majha and Malwa, he left for the south western Punjab and spread the Guru's Gospel in the villages of Jhang Manghiana and Dera Ismail. He wanted to advance to the province of Sind as well, but he dropped this idea, probably he thought it more useful to convert Sewa Ram who was born at Hyderabad

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(India) and whose mother had died and father had left home in search of peace and had undertaken tour of different sacred places to find the way to bliss. When he came across Bhai Ghaniya, he felt peculiar placidity and requested Bhai ji to initiate him into his order and give him instructions. Bhai ji then acquainted him with the teachings of the Gurus and the regard with which the tenet of service is Sikhism. He said, "To provide comforts to all human beings irrespective of their forms and affiliations and to have faith in the teachings of the Gurus is our only advice."

After this, Bhai ji and Sewa Ram entered the province of Sind. They sojourned at Nurpur. Finding there is a scarcity of water, a programme of sinking well was launched. Sewa Ram took leading part in this work. Bhai ji, in fact, used to eliminate egocentricity by putting in service for the people. Service was also rendered in the construction of the Dharmshala of Nurpur. A Dharamshala was also established at Lao Nagar which is situated near Jhang Manghiana. At this place, Ghaniya won over another disciple Addan Shah who had learnt Panjabi from an Udasi saint, Gurdas and who possessed religious bent of mind, saturated with love for every one. In this way, many persons became Bhai ji's followers, and a separate order emerged known in history, as Sewa Panth, the Path of Service. Bhai Ghaniya died but his order carried on his work un-interruptedly. Wherever the members of this order went they preached human sympathy, selflessness, universal brotherhood and since they always evoked respect for themselves, they by implication endear Sikhism among the people. In the later Mughal period if the general Musalmans did not dislike the Sikhs, and Sikhism was regarded as a balm for the afflicted humanity, much of the credit goes to them.

After Ghaniya's death the work was carried on under the over-all guidance of Sewa Ram. Sewa Ram's headquarter was at Nurpur (Sind) wherefrom he used to fan out in different directions to serve the people to make them realise the importance of truthful living.

After Bhai Sewa Ram, his disciple Bhai Santokh Singh took charge of the headquarter. Bhai Santokh Singh belonged to the village, Khari. He, during his life time, had been instructed by Sewa Ram who said, "Recognise the light within every body, serve all and raise yourself above worldy attachments."

Bhai Santokh Singh was succeeded by Bhai Budhan Ram and Sahib Ram. Sewa Panthis from Nurpur headquarter had been rendering yeoman's service to the people.

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Bhai Ghaniya's another disciple, Addan Shah also made a mark in rendering service to the people. He belonged to village Lao and often lived there. He stayed at Phagwara and Kartarpur also. He did a lot of travelling, to sacred places. He had his admirers among big zamindars and masses alike. His charismatic personality won over quite a large number of disciples. He used to spin coarse yarn, prepare ink for his livelihood. He advised his disciples also to earn livelihood through honest earning, without becoming rich. In 1757 this great man expired at Jammu. This was the time when Panjab was suffering from political termoil caused by Ahmed Shah Abdali's invasion.

After 1757, Sewa Panthis made a lot of progress as regards general popularity and organisation. Many Dharamshalas were raised in different parts of the country. Bhai Aya Ram, Bhai Ranga ji, Bhai Daya Ram, Bhai Dayal, Bhai Soma, Bhai Paras Ram were the most important among many Sewa Panthis of the later Mughal period. Paras Ram being a *Pingla* could not walk easily, but still the zest for service which he showed was unsurpassed. The Dharamshala from where he operated still stands in the Jangi Shivala Bazaar, Amritsar. He and his disciples did not allow the earthen lamp to extinguish in Hari Mandir during the times of Zakariya Khan when the Government was bent upon destroying the Sikhs root and branch.

Many other Sewa Panthis served Sikhism and people. Bhai Jawahar Singh of Mitha Tiwana was another luminary of the galaxy of the line who served the people from 1900 to 1950. Now his disciple Sant Nischal Singh ji has been serving the people of Haryana from his headquarter at Jagadhari.

The Sewa Panthi order was just like the Servants of the People's Society or the Red Cross Society whose objective is to bring about consciousness among people to love one-another, to help one-another and to respect one-another. The members of this order were committed to the aforesaid objectives and regarded service (Sewa) as the true path to salvation, for doing service unto others was possible only when one had transcended narrowself.

For their own sustenance, they did not like depending upon alms or collecting their requirements through begging. Unlike many orders of saints in India, they never roamed about begging the eatables or other requisite things. Bhai Aya Ram advised Bhai Dharm Das, "Never get offerings, Live upon the

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earning of your labour. Make ropes or strings out of hemp yarn, sell them and live by the earnings you get. Bhai Bhall Ram said to his disciples, "You should not keep more than five rupees with you. More wealth distracts one from social service." Addan Shah's advice was that his disciples should work honestly and diligently. He said, "the ropes must be made nicely; the work to be done should be done properly."

One can adopt any profession according to one's capacity and capability. If one did not know making ropes, one could cut grass and sell in the market. According to Dr. Balbir Singh, "Each Sewa Panthi must do some labour. If one cannot do hard labour, one can adopt such jobs which involve less labour; one could prepare ink or pens made of reed. Addan Shah himself wrote books."

Sewa Panthis were prohibited to get loans because they wanted to keep themselves at a safe distance from the implications which were bound to flow from money transactions. They believed in distributing their everything among the people. Bhai Ram Kishen never felt any hesitation while giving even his clothes and shoes to the needy.

Sewa Panthis did not believe in married life. They looked down upon woman and considered her 'a temptress'. When Bhai Bhall went to Nurpur to see Bhai Aya Ram, he got made a veil to be hung between him and the people around so that ladies should not come to him. It is recorded that henceforward ladies saluted him from outside only.

Sewa Panthis is an order of just like monastic order of the Christians in the medieval age. But whereas the Christian monastic order turned to be the hot-bed of intrigues and centre of corruption, Sewa Panthis could keep themselves above these things. The reasons probably were their emphasis on living through honest earnings and keeping needs to the bare minimum.

The source of inspiration of Sewa Panthis is ten Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib. They upto Addan Shah, did not have any particular dress but after Addan Shah they began to wear simple cloth-made caps on their heads and an unstitched sheet of cloth round to cover the lower part of their bodies. Short shirts (ਕੁਰਤੀ) were used to cover the upper parts of their bodies. They were not particular about keeping long hair (Keshas) although Bhai Ghaniya had grown them. Sewa Ram and Addan Shah had never shaved. They were fond of white clothes.

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NIRMAL PANTH

The term 'Nirmal Panth' is as old as Sikhism itself. What is the etymology of term ? The reply to this question is given by Kanwar Mrigindra Singh. He says, "The religious order started by Guru Nanak was without any particular form and just comprised the teachings of Guru Nank and righteous living taught by him to his pupils. But in the course of time, other schools found it necessary to refer to it by some name, for the name 'Sikh' was then ambiguous being used by the Budhhists, Yogis of Gorakh and the followers of all Hindu schools. Therefore, Guru Nanak's school with its emphasis on purity was referred to as the pure path (Nirmal Panth) by others and later even by Guru Nanak's Sikhs in reference to themselves for their distinction." Bhai Gurdas refers to Guru Nanak's school Nirmal Path (Pure Path). Similarly Bhatts use this term in reference to Guru Amar Das and Guru Arjan Dev.

Upto Guru Gobind Singh's time no distinction was made between Nirmal Panth and other names 'Nanak Panth', 'Gurmukh Panth' and 'Guru Sikh Panth'.

But with Guru Gobind Singh, the annotation did not remain as wide as it was before; it began to be used in reference to a particular school committed to definite goals and programmes.

As it is well known Guru Gobind Singh matured and concretised most of his plans at Paonta—one of those plans was the propagation of Sikhism through the medium of literature throughout India. It was with this object that Guru Gobind Singh wanted to establish a special order of his Sikhs particularly to make comparative study of religions and also interpret classical Indian tradition in terms of the basic philosophy of Sikhism.

The project thus conceived had incidental advantages as well. Since times immemorial learning and teaching had been the exclusive privilege of Brahmins, Sanyasis or Vairagis (ascetics); but the project of the Guru was sure to give a strong blow to the idea of class learning and of missionaries belonging to a particular caste.

Since most of the classical Indian religious literature was available in Sanskrit, the Guru found it imperative to make arrangement for the teaching of Sanskrit to his followers. Accordingly, Guru Gobind Singh asked his court poet Pandit

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Raghu Nath to do the needful. The Pandit politely and very diplomatically replied that he was prohibited by convention to teach the language of the Gods (Deva Bhasha) and the holy scriptures to non-dvijas i.e. Shudras and women. Guru Gobind Singh admonished him for his ego and pride for his most unreasonable stand. The same day, Guru Gobind Singh also invited the udasis to assist him in seeing his plans through.

They also did not respond and were not ready to effect any change in their traditional outlook and approach.

Ultimately, the Guru selected a dozen of Sikhs from all classes, castes, and creeds and sent them to Benaras. Their names were (1) Pandit Karma Singh, (2) Pandit Rama Singh, (3) Pandit Ganda (Singh), (4) Pandit Vir (Singh), (5) Pandit Sobha Singh, (6) Dharam Singh, (7) Daya Singh, (8) Kesar Singh, (9) Muhkam Singh, (10) Gian Singh, (11) Gaja Singh, (12) Chanda Singh, (13) Saina Singh. All these chosen Sikhs studied under the guidance of Pandit Sadda Nand for six years. In the seventh year, they came back to the Guru who now had shifted to Anandpur.

Guru Gobind Singh was much pleased to find that they had become really good scholars and allotted them different duties. Pandit Karma Singh was asked to give sermons on Guru Granth Sahib in the Guru's court in the morning.

He did his job meticulously and nicely. The Guru having been deeply impressed by his exposition directed Bhai Mani Singh to become his student and learn six *darsanas*. Within a short time quite a few hundred scholars belonging to all castes were ready for missionary work.

As the number of Nirmalas increased, they were divided into two distinct branches: (i) Nirmala saints who wore the ascetic pink (Bhagva) robe given by the Guru and did not marry though they did not prohibit it, and in fact asked people to live a pious married life; (ii) the Nirmalas who adored white clothes. The latter were further split into two categories: the unmarried among them were referred to 'saint' but the married were referred to as Giani (knowledged).

Nirmalas exerted a lot to disseminate Sikhism and to bring about general awakening among the people. In the life time of Guru Gobind Singh, by his orders, Bhai Punjab Singh Nirmala came to the Punjab, settled down at Khadur. He so identified himself with the cause of the people that they adored

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him and thought it a good luck to enter into Sikh fold. His grand pupil Rocha Singh Nirmala was responsible for conversion, on a large scale, in the predominant Muslim areas of Kashmir and Pothohar (West Punjab).

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the Nirmalas spared no pains to spread the message of the Guru. They acted not only as torch bearer of Sikhism but also as conscience keepers and political advisers of the Sikhs. When differences arose between Vinodh Singh Trehan (in the seventh generation of Guru Angad Dev), Dharam Singh Nirmala advised him to leave Banda Singh Bahadur in the larger interest of the Sikhs. It was again Baba Dharam Singh who brought Vinod Singh in touch with Baba Dip Singh and Baba Ala Singh (the founder of Patiala State). Baba Ala Singh took Khande-ki-Pahul in which Baba Dharam Singh, Baba Vinod Singh and Baba Dip Singh acted as Piyaras. Baba Ala Singh so much appreciated the sagacity of Baba Dharam Singh that he gave the land[1] where the ceremony was held to Baba Gurmukh Singh Nirmala, a pupil of Baba Dharam Singh Nirmala. One of the Panj Piyaras, Bhai Durgah Singh Nirmala settled down at Kankhal (two miles from Haridwar, U.P.). He was a great marks-man. He fought for Rai Ahmed of Najibabad against the Rohilas. Since Rai Ahmed of Najibabad was victorious, he offered a grant of land to Bhai Durgah Singh Nirmala on account of his service. Sant Nikka Singh was given a gift of thirty villages by Bibi Pradhan, the daughter of Baba Ala Singh. Sant ji refused to accept such a big grant for his maintenance and only kept one village, named Khudi near Barnala. Many other such gifts were given to the Nirmalas by the Khalsa for their much-needed services to them.[2]

Sardar Dhyan Singh of Shahbad willed his estate to Sant Karm Singh Nirmala(Chote). Sardar Ganda Singh of Bhangi Misl offered thirteen villages to Sant Jai Singh Nirmala who instead of keeping it for himself passed it on to Udasi Dera of Santokh Das. Similarly Sardar Sadda Singh of Bahirwala gave a patta of seven villages to Sant Bhagat Singh Nirmala in the year A.D. 1766. The offer was declined by the Sant but the Patta is still available at Bunga of Mana Singh Wala, Amritsar. Sardar Jai Singh's daughter-in-law donated two villages in favour of the Nirmala Dera at Kankhal.

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1. The Dera is now called Dera Thakar Tota Singh and is situated at Thikriwala.
2. Refer to Nirmal Panth Darshan by Mahant Dayal Singh.

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In the year 1796, Maharaja Ranjit Singh offered a written sanad to Sant Nihal Singh Nirmala. The Sant passed on the property to Udasi Akhara of Santokh Das.

In the years when there was comparative peace in the Punjab after the failure of Ahmed Shah Abdali in his invasion, Nirmalas stepped up their activities of proselytization. It was during this period that they started visiting different places at the time of the Hindu festivals to conduct their missionary work. This thing as well as the exclusive patronage of the Sikh chiefs to the Nirmalas caused a lot of heart-burning among the Hindu sects of *Sannyasis* and *Vairagis* who had always thought that the gifts would be given only to them by the chiefs.

The heart-burning led, not unoften, to serious quarrels. At the Kumbh Mela of 1807 at Haridwar there was a polemical discussion between the Nirmalas on one side and the *Sannyasis* and *Bairagis* on the other. The Nirmalas made such a great philosophical impact on the people by showing the distinction between Guru Nanak's spirit—temporal philosophy and other schools of socio-religious philosophy that both Sannyasis and Vairagis accepted that a Nirmla whatever be his caste or creed, could enter any Hindu temple in India.

In the year 1819 at the Kumbha Mela at Kurukshetra the Vairagis physically led an attack on Nirmala gatherings and cut up Guru Granth Sahib with the sword.

This event caused a lot of stir among the Sikhs. The Udasis and Nirmalas put up a request to the various Sikh chiefs for help. Maharaja Karam Singh of Patiala, Sardar Karma Singh Nirmala of Shahbad with Nanu Singh of Shahbad, Sardar Rai Singh of Buria, Sardar Dasaundha Singh of Sadhora, Sardar Bhagel Singh of Malaud, Raja Jogh Singh of Kalsia, Sardar Rup Singh of Rupar and many other Sardars with their forces marched to Haridwar with the Maharaja of Patiala at head[1]. The Sannyasis were easily put to flight. The Vairagis were also taught a lesson, their camp near Dahsha Prajapati's temples, was ransacked and their monastries were razed to the ground. The Sannyasis were forced to abandon the malpractice of raising a rupee per person whose head was to be shaven there.

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1. Refer to the Research Paper 'Nirmal Panth' by Kanwar Mrigindra Singh. Published in Punjab History Conference proceedings, March 9-10, 1969.

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After this happening, the Nirmalas began to attend all the four Kumbha Melas at Haridwar, Nasik, Ujjain and Traveni. Most of the Gurdwaras at such places owed their existence to them. The 'Gurdwara Pakki Sangat of Traveni' built to perpetuate the memory of Guru Teg Bahadur is with the Nirmalas even to-day.

It was through the sustained and consistent efforts of Nirmalas that many persons of the province of Sind (Now in Pakistan) came into the Sikh fold. In the recent past Sant Attar Singh did commendable work of proselytisation in Malwa. At present, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, the most repected Sikh of the present times is doing invaluable work to rejuvenate the Sikh masses.

Nirmalas have done commendable work in the field of comparative study of classical philosophy and have written books of great value in this connection in Sanskrit, Brija, Hindi, Panjabi both in Gurmukhi script and Devnagri script. Sant Nikka Singh translated Yoga Vasishtha into Braj and wrote it in Panjabi script. Sant Nihal Singh Nirmala wrote a Sanskrit commentary on the 'Japu' of Guru Granth Sahib. Tara Singh Narotam also produced a few good books such as Gurdwara Darshan etc. The Urdu Language was also enriched by them, as they produced a lot of literature in it for their missionary work.

In 1861 they set up their central organisation to co-ordinate their activities.

It was in this year that yellow flag of Guru Gobind Singh with 'Khanda' super-imposed was flown on the building known as 'Dharma Dvaja' where the meeting was held to establish the aforesaid organisation.

The Nirmalas are the Khalsa, having full faith in Guru Granth Sahib, Khande-ki-Pahul, five 'akars' i.e. to say sword, unshorn hair, a pair of shorts (Kachha), comb, iron bracelet. The names of all Nirmalas end with 'Singh'. They do not follow udasis who keep knotted hair (Jatas) and whose names end with 'Das'.

Though they adopt outer symbols, yet they are clear that these without inner purity and discipline have got no meaning. These days, their headquarter is at Kankhal.

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Asht Ratnas : Eight Eminent Sikhs

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Chapter 17

ASHT RATNAS—EIGHT EMINENT SIKHS

BHAI BUDDHA

Baba Buddha whose original name was Bura was born on October 22, 1506 A.D. His father's name was Sugha Randhawa and mother's Gauran. They lived in Kathu Nangal, a village of Amritsar district. After some time they settled down in Dhalla village not far away from river Ravi opposite Kartarpur.

In 1524, when Guru Nanak was returning to Kartarpur on the western bank of river Ravi, he saw a boy grazing cattle in the fields nearby. The boy rushed to him, made obeisance and offered if he could do him any service. The Guru was much impressed by the demeanour and civility of the boy, who also grew fond of the Guru.

Bura, having found out the name of the village where Guru Nanak lived, decided to pay him a visit. Next morning he took a pot, full of butter-milk with a lump of butter floating in it, and went to the Guru. He presented his gift in all reverence and humility and listened to the Guru's sermons with devotion of a true seeker. Then he beseeched Guru to tell him the way to attain the state of bliss. Nanak tried to put him off thinking that such a problem did not concern a boy of his age. Bura's questions were so deep and relevant, that Guru remarked that Bura was young in age but old in wisdom and was not Bura but Burha or Buddha, an awakened being. Since then Bura came to be called as Bhai Buddha. He became a sincere devotee of the Guru, spent a good deal of his time with him, and lived like a lotus. Bhai Buddha entered into discipleship of the Guru at the age of ten.

Guru Nanak considered him to be one of his chosen apostles and appointed him Master of ceremonies over the coronation of his successor. Bhai Buddha had the unique privilege of crowning the first six Gurus in succession. All the Gurus respected him as their teacher, Guardian Angel and godfather. They never commanded him to do anything and they never refused any of his requests. His word was considered law. His utterances were deemed prophetic.

Bhai Buddha always looked after the welfare of the Sikhs and spared no pains to spread the Sikh faith among the people.

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Whenever a crisis overtook the Sikh community or Sikh church, he was never found lacking in some solution to it.

On Guru Nanak's death in 1539, Guru Angad left Kartarpur and established his seat at Khadur near river Beas. Sri Chand, the elder son of Guru Nanak was not happy at his supersession in favour of Angad. Guru Angad, to avoid open clash with the son of the Guru Nanak, hid himself in the house of an old woman named Bhiragi at village Sanghar. Bhai Buddha came all the way from Kartarpur to Khadur and prevailed upon the Guru to give up seclusion and resume his duties. At the time of Amar Das's nomination to Guruship similar crisis gripped the Sikhs. Guru Amar Das, because of his deep regard for Guru Angad Dev, did not want to annoy his son, Datu who burned with jealousy at the succession of Guru Amar Das to Gur-Gaddi. He, therefore, hid himself in a hut in the jungle near Basarke village, with instructions that he should not be disturbed. Bhai Buddha persuaded the Guru to attend the Sikhs who were regularly calling at Goindwal and exercised his influence to assuage Shri Datu.

At the assumption of the pontificate by Guru Arjan Dev, Prithi Chand who himself wanted to be the pontiff entered into collusive arrangement with the Masands and projected that he was the real Guru. Bhai Buddha was one of the few disciples who with resoluteness denounced Prithi Chand and foiled him in his cunning attempts to seat himself on Guru-gaddi. It was primarily due to his lead that Prithi Chand did not succeed in bringing about scheism among the Sikhs, although he had tried hard. Guru Arjan Dev held Bhai Buddha in high esteem, so much so that he regarded it a boon to have his blessings. As Guru Arjan had no issue for many years, Prithia proclaimed that the Guru was not destined to have any offspring, and the Guruship would eventually come to him. The Guru's wife Ganga was cut to the quick at such remarks. She begged the Guru to bless her with a son. He told her to get the blessings of Bhai Buddha. The Baba was then living in the jungle of Basarke village. Mata Ganga waited upon Buddha in a grand procession with rich presents of food, sweets and fruits. Buddha did not like this show and remained cold. She complained to the Guru. He advised her to go there again like a peasant woman with bread, butter-milk and onions only. The lady was blessed. The sixth Guru, Hargobind was her only child.

Bhai Buddha was a great mystic and a great teacher. Though records do not speak much as to how he received education; but it is reasonable to surmise that he received his education at Kartarpur at the feet of Guru Nanak. He was

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well-versed in the sacred hymns of Guru Nanak and other Gurus, and with remarkable ease could quote them. When Guru Angad decided to popularise Panjabi alphabet and Panjabi language, he assigned to himself the task of teaching it. He was the veritable tutor of Hargobind. It is not wrong to assume that Guru Hargobind's psyche was much influenced by Bhai Buddha.

It is only reasonable to think that Bhai Buddha must have told his pupil how the Mughals forcibly destroyed the crops of his father and no one could withhold the hand of a tyrant. Guru Tegh Bahadur was also taught by Bhai Buddha. "Guru Hargobind personally took him (Tegh Bahadur) to Bhai Buddha, the wisest among teachers and said: 'you were kind enough to be my teacher, O Enlightened one, accept Tegh Bahadur as your pupil'. Tegh Bahadur bowed before the sage who blessed him and accepted him as his student." According to Dr. Fauja Singh, Tegh Bahadur imbibed the mysticism from Bhai Buddha. Bhai Buddha taught him Panjabi and passed on to him the deep spiritual experience which he had gained. Besides this, he along with Bhai Gurdas made arrangement for his education in subjects such as Languages, History, Arithmetic. At a little maturer age, he was taught Metaphysics, Logic, Theology, Six Systems and classics like the Bhagvad Gita, Mahabharata, Ramayana. Elementary Islamic philosophy, Koranic Lore, and Sufi texts were also taught to Hargobind.

Bhai Buddha being an activist, took part in almost all important projects initiated by the Guru. When Guru Ram Das started digging the tank of Amritsar, Bhai Buddha took upon himself the responsibility of supervising the digging operations. It was under his fostering care that the tank was completed. Again during Guru Arjan Dev's time, he was the person who saw to the conduct of the digging operation of Santokhsar. Kaulsar was also excavated under his supervision. The emergence of the city of Amritsar also owed much to his sagacious advice and the devotion with which he prevailed upon the people in the neighbouring area to settle there.

When Guru Arjan decided to compile Adi Granth, Buddha was sent to Mohan to procure the hymns of the previous Gurus. Although Mohan refused to give the sacred treasure and parted with only when Guru Arjan personally went to him, yet the incident is manifestative of the Guru's unshakable trust in him. On the completion of Adi Granth, he was made the first priest of the Hari Mandir. Having placed the bound copy of the Holy Granth on a cot, Baba Buddha carried it on his head bare-foot to Hari Mandir followed by Guru Arjan also

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bare-foot with a peacock feathers for waving over the sacred scripture. Bhai Gurdas was the third to follow at the head of Sangat. The first recitation was done by Bhai Gurdas. As the head-priest of Hari Mandir, Bhai Buddha, exerted to the maximum to the effect that Adi Granth might be held in proper reverence and he laid down programme to be followed meticulously in Hari Mandir. He was always awake to the exigencies of the circumstances and lost no time to take steps. When Guru Hargobind was imprisoned in the fort and there was apprehension that the Sikhs might not sag in spirit, he lost no time to act. He contacted the people of influence to put pressure on Jahangir to release the Guru. It is said that Buddha ji himself went to Gwalior to bring the news about the Guru.

The greatest contribution of Bhai Buddha was to render much-needed help to the Guru in making explicit the policy of Miri and Piri, which meant that the political as well as spiritual sovereignty vested in the Guru. The concept was first framed by Guru Arjan Dev, although its rudiments could be found in the sacred utterances of the previous Gurus as well. Guru Arjan Dev trained Guru Hargobind in the philosophy of this dual responsibility. The authenticity of this fact is vouchsafed by Bhai Mani Singh in his book "Bhagat Ratnavli." He says:

> "Bhai Sigaru and Bhai Jaita were great warriors and philanthrophists. They were asked to live in the service to Guru Hargobind. Guru Arjan said to them 'the House of the Guru will take up arms under Hargobind. The dark age prevails. After learning the use of weapons, the Sikhs will wrest political power from the rulers and through the love of Divine Word (Shabad) they will acquire the spiritual wisdom of Divine Teachers. Abide with Hargobind'."

Bhai Buddha true to the advice of Guru Arjan Dev put on two swords on both sides of Guru Hargobind, one as the symbol of Miri (temporal sovereignty) and the other as the symbol of Piri (spiritual sovereignty). This explicit pronouncement caused a furore among the Sikhs. Some of them who were incapable of grasping the import of the Sikh Movement in all its aspects began to entertain doubts regarding the validity, even desirability of the policy. Bhai Buddha not only did his best to remove misgivings of such people but also made them understand the changed perspective which was responsible for the enunciation of such a policy.

The great sage passed away in the winter of the year 1631 A.D. at the age of 125 years in village Ramdaspur about twenty-

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seven miles from Amritsar. Guru Hargobind who had come to Ramdaspur a few days earlier was deeply moved at the death. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the Guru as the flames went up.

MARDANA

Mardana was the closest associate and the dearest disciple of Guru Nanak. According to Bhai Manohar Dass Meharban, Mardana had been the companion of Guru Nanak since childhood. Both Mardana and Guru Nanak were born at Talwandi Rai Bhoi Ki, Mardana in 1459 and Guru Nanak in 1469. Mardana's original name was Dana. 'Mardana' was the title conferred on him by Guru Nanak. The names of Dana's revered father and mother were Bhai Badrev and Lakho. According to Bhai Kahan Singh, Mardana breathed his last in 1534 at Kurum and Guru Nanak himself performed the last rites. But this date does not stand the test of historical scrutiny. Guru Nanak could not be at Kurum in 1534. Even if Mardana had himself gone to Kurum and expired there, how could, then, Guru Nanak be there at his funeral. In fact he died at Kartarpur and was cremated on the banks of the Ravi in Guru Nanak's presence. Mardana had two sons, Shahzada and Raizada and a daughter.

Mardana's father was the family bard of Mehta Kalu. Badrev and Mardana called every morning at the houses of local residents and obtained alms generally in kind in the form of flour or some eatables. Both would sing to the accompaniment of music or rebec and receiving charity would move next door. Nanak as a child listened to their sweet music and felt elated. According to Professor Satbir Singh,[1] "Nanak and Mardana first came into contact in A.D. 1480. It all happened at Talwandi while, once lying under a tree the sound of someone's playing on the rebec passed his (Guru Nanak's) ears. He arose, approached the man playing on the rebec and asked his name. He answered, 'Sir, Mirassi (bard) people call me by the name Dana'. Hearing this, Baba appreciated his fine playing on the rebec and his excellent understanding of Ragas. Baba suggested, in case he accompanied him and sang 'ragas' along with Shabad, he would get the better of both the worlds. To this Dana replied, 'We hardly make our both ends meet, by singing Ragas before the rich. In case we follow you, our families would perish for want of food and being starved, we shall miss our prayer (Namaz) even, and thus, we shall stand

1. Taken from the article 'Guru Nanak's life long companion—Rababi Mardana by Satbir Singh.

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condemned in both the worlds. How do you plan to liberate me ?' Then Guru Nanak said, 'O Dana: You are ignorant. God protects and feeds us all. Namaz (Prayer) and Roza (fast) are benedictions bestowed by God. God's abode is the heart of the saints. At the final judgement, none shall come to the rescue.' Guru Nanak further emphasized, "Dana, in case you now turn to be 'Mardana' (brave) and sing Raga along with the word of God (Shabad) you will gain in both the worlds." Dana now turned to Mardana set out with Guru Nanak to enlighten the people living in this world. Mardana played on rebec and Guru Nanak sang Shabads. Quite often Mardana also sang the divine words along with the Guru. Thus the Kirtan came into existence. Kirtan is the divine words (Shabads) sung in accompaniment of the music. Bhai Mardana once asked, 'Baba, is this the word of God that we sing in Kirtan? Is this the word that contains salvation or is it some other?' To this Guru replied, 'Kirtan is the word that Guru utters. Contemplation of the word leads to salvation.'

In course of time, Nanak left Talwandi and went to Sultanpur Lodi where he was employed in the service of Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of Jullundur Doab. Nanak after some time, sent for him from Talwandi. He came in response to Guru Nanak's call and began to reside at Sultanpur with Guru Nanak.

It became usual with both of them to sing songs in praise of God in a public place. Their melodious voice and soft strains on rebec touched the hearts of listeners and transported them into a state of bliss. This drama was daily enacted in the streets ot Sultanpur for seven long years.

After the divine experience at Sultanpur, the Guru became a missionary and he decided to awaken the people to the reality by undertaking long and arduous journeys in all directions. To begin with, he proceeded to the eastern part of the country. Thence-from he visited places in the south. After this he went to Ceylon.

All the time, during this travels, Mardana was with Guru Nanak. He suffered the hardships of journey, and pangs of separation from his family and kith and kin but he remained unflinching in his faith in Guru Nanak.

Janam Sakhis are replete with anecdotes portraying wit and wisdom of Mardana. Barring a few questions which are either concocted or connected purposely with the fair name of Mardana in order to ridicule him possibly to emphasise that the

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Guru had the unique power of transforming brass into gold, all other questions touch the deepest chords of human heart as also the root problems of the worldly persons which hamper them from taking cudgels to better their own lot and of the people at large. Hunger, thirst, family comfort, poverty, insecurity were some of the things which often tormented Mardana as much as every human being but the beauty of Mardana was that he did not allow himself to be given to them, and with sustained efforts reached the stage of identification between himself and the Guru. Visualising the approaching end of Mardana, Guru Nanak once asked, "Consequent upon your wishes, your body after death, may be let into water like Brahmins, or it may be cremated like Khatris, or it may be thrown to winds like one of Parsee or it may be buried like that of a Muslim." Mardana answered, "Well, Baba, you still think of the body. By the grace of your teachings, I have entirely forgotten about it. Now I regard my soul as the sole guardian of my body". Again Guru Nanak exclaimed, "Shall I make you famous by constructing a suitable tomb and render thee, famous in the world?" Mardana replied, "When my soul has been separated from its bodily tomb, why shut it up in the stone tomb?" Baba stepped in forward, embraced Mardana and declared, "Mardana, you have realised the Infinite." At the close of the first itinerary, Mardana reached Talwandi. His wife and children tried to retain him, but he did not agree. Now he was awakened, he again accompanied Nanak in his journey into the west Asian countries.

At the harbour of Surat, Nanak and Mardana sailed in the boat for Saudi Arabia. Having visited Mecca and Madina they reached Baghdad, the capital of the caliph of Islam. As usual, they stayed outside the town near graveyard. Nanak's visit to Baghdad is recorded in the Vars of Bhai Gurdas who writes :—

> Baba gaya Baghdad nun Bahar Jai Kiya Asthana
> Ik Baba akal rup duja rababi Mardana.
>
> [Baba went to Baghdad, and put up outside.
> The immortal Baba was accompanied by the rebec-player Mardana.]

On the roadside, Nanak began to sing hymns in praise of God, and Mardana played a symphonic strain on his musical instrument. Although the people could not understand the language of the hymns, yet the melodious voice with which the hymns were being sung, produced a soothing effect on their minds. As a result, the local pir was converted to Guru Nanak's views and became his disciple.

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Nanak settled at Kartarpur, Mardana also came to this place. Mardana was a master-rebec player. He improved the old form of instrument by fixing to strings to a hollow gourd so as to produce deep and melodious strain.

He composed verses also, three of which are included in the Adi Granth in Bihagre ki Var. In the first Sloka Mardana compares human personality of those living in the dark age to the vessel used for the extraction of wine. Lust is the wine that human heart continues to consume. Human wrath makes the cup of temptations, fill it and vanity feeds it. By partaking this wine in the company of unsanctified beings, human heart is degrading itself continuously.

In the second Sloka, Mardana regards it a further plunge into evils for those who partake of this fictitious wine.

In the third Sloka, suggesting a way out from these evils, Mardana thinks "man can find an escape from the evils provided his body (vessel) partakes the wine of Nector—a wine that inspires the urge for inner realisation and immortality from a cup of devotion in the company of honest and chaste persons."

GURDAS

A brilliant scholar, a great poet, a devoted Sikh, a zealous missionary, a great organiser and a great visionary, Bhai Gurdas was born in 1551 A.D. He was the son of Guru Amar Das's brother, Tej Bhan. His mother's name was Jiwani. He was thus the first cousin of Bibi Bhani who was the daughter of Guru Amar Das, wife of Guru Ram Das and mother of Guru Arjan Dev. His parents belonged to Basarke but later on they migrated to Goindwal, the headquarter of Guru Amar Das. Since his childhood, Gurdas had fascination for Sikh Sangats. According to Hari Ram Gupta, "he possessed a sweet and melodious voice, and enthusiastically participated in singing hymns. He developed great love and affection for the Guru's teachings. He picked up Gurmukhi and learnt by heart Gurbani or the Guru's hymns, prayers and chants. He seldom missed any divine service."

Note much is known as to how and wherefrom he received his education but one thing is certain that he was well-versed in Panjabi, Sanskrit, Braj Bhasha and in the science of Music. He was a keen observer, extremely sensitive, high perceptive, wide awake and broad-minded.

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His stance and psych bore the stamp of the Gurus, and there is no wonder that he was ever ready to do anything for the Guru.

He being an erudite scholar was entrusted the duty of writing the Granth at Guru's dictation. Guru Arjan selected a beautiful site two kilometres to the east of the holy tank in the grove of Beri (Zizphus Jujuha) trees on the bank of a tank, called Ramsar. There he sat on a cot inside and Bhai Gurdas outside. For four hours everyday the Guru gave dictation and Bhai Gurdas went on writing without a pause or murmur. The Granth was written in the modified Gurmukhi script.[1] Having included the hymns of Bhaktas in Adi Granth, the Guru asked Bhai ji to insert his own Vars and Kabits also. Bhai ji declined saying that he had not achieved that degree of spirituality as the Bhaktas had got.

In 1605 Emperor Akbar on a visit to Lahore stayed at Batala. Prithi Chand managed to complain to the Emperor to the effect that Guru Arjan Dev in 'Adi Granth' had denounced both Hinduism and Islam. The Emperor called for the Granth. Guru Arjan Dev sent it under the custody of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Buddha. Akbar asked Bhai Gurdas to read at a certain place. Bhai Gurdas at once complied but the Emperor found nothing offensive to Muslim susceptibilities. Then Akbar asked his clerk, Munshi Sarb Dayal who knew Gurmukhi to read the sacred Granth Sahib from another place. Now it was read as under:

Koi Bole Ram Ram Koi Khoda

(Some call Him Ram Ram, others Khuda)

The Emperor was pleased as the readings echoed his feelings. This being so, he made an offering of 51 gold mohars to the Granth Sahib, and awarded robes of honour to its two bearers with another Khilat for the Guru.

Bhai ji suffered from extreme mental agony when Guru Arjan Dev was executed. He was present in the congress of the important Sikhs held at the instance of the Guru on the eve of his departure to Lahore in response to the summons of Jahangir. He listened to the parting message of the Guru.

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1. When Guru Arjan planned the compilation of Adi Granth, he asked Bhai Gurdas to simplify Gurmukhi script. Refer to Sikhan di Bhagat Mala by Bhai Mani Singh.

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After the execution of the fifth Guru and during the years when Guru Hargobind was in prison in Gwalior, the affairs of the Sikh community were left in the hands of trusted followers, among whom were Bhai Buddha and Bhai Gurdas. On the release of Guru Hargobind from the prison of Gwalior Gurdas was sent on a mission to purchase horses from Kabul. Before he could complete the deal, his money was stolen and the crest-fallen Gurdas being unable to face his master fled to Benaras. He was apprehended and brought to Amritsar. The Guru forgave him, and he again resumed his duties as the chief organiser of the Sikh community.

Bhai Gurdas supported Guru Hargobind in initiating his new policy whereby he claimed that he symbolized in himself Miri (temporal sovereignty) and Piri (spiritual sovereignty), and to lend substance to his policy, the Guru adopted militant ways. This policy caused unrest in the Sikh community. Bhai Gurdas rose to the defence of his master. He described the Guru, "the destroyer of enemy hordes, the hero of battles, the great warrior, as well as the great benefactor."

Bhai Gurdas will ever be remembered for his compositions, known as vars in which he explained main tenets of Sikhism apart from giving general information regarding men and matters. He wrote 39 vars (ballads in heroic metre in Panjabi). Kabits (couplet) in Brij, are written by a Sindhi poet of Shikarpur of the same name. In the copies of Gurdas's vars which are current to-day, there is the 40th var written by a Sindhi poet of Shikarpur of the same name. The Sindhi Gurdas lived in the time of Banda. These compositions contain several references to persons and events which are of great importance to the historians of today.

There are 85 passages in 39 vars which deserve attention viz. var 1 pauri 17-48, var 11, var 21 pauri 13-31, var 24 pauri 1-25, var 3 pauri 12, var 20 pauri 1 and var 38 pauri 20. It is really surprising that Bhai Gurdas did not say anything about the compilation of Adi Granth and the execution of Guru Arjan Dev. In the list of important disciples of Guru Nanak, he made notable omissions of Rai Bular and various others who were the devout disciples of Guru Nanak. The reference to the execution of the fifth Guru is indirect and vague. Bhai Gurdas says:—

"The Guru hath taken his abode in the river among the fish,

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As moths that see the flame fall upon it and merge their light with His Light,

As deer hear the sound of a distant drum and run to it without a care of doom,

As butterflies seattle on the lotus and die on it during the night,

The Guru's teachings we forget not and like the monsoon birds are ever calling,

The Good have peace, the nectar of love and the company of the gentle.

Thus is my life a sacrifice to Guru Arjun.[1]

Bhai Gurdas's compositions are a key to the understanding of Sikh doctrines, Sikh organisation, Sikh cosmology, Sikh Metaphysics and Sikh Theology. He dwelt on the disciple-preceptor relationship, and the spirit that the Gurus were. He heralded to the world, perhaps for the first time, in unambiguous terms that the Sikh religion was not only the need of the hour but enshrined in itself hope for future generations. His compositions provide perspective which enable a reader to grasp the true import of the theme. He presented the Gurus as God incarnates, benefactors, redeemers, prophets, the spirit. He regarded Sangat, a school for spiritualization of individuals, soul culturalization, socialization of the individuals. Moreover, he spelt very methodically the process of regenerating the degenerate man. He also viewed Sikh religion as Universal Brotherhood. Gurdas remained celebrate and died in 1631.[2]

BHAI MANI SINGH

Bhai Mani Singh, one of the galaxy of the eminent Sikhs of the Guru period and the later Mughal period, was born on March 10, 1644 A.D. at Alipur, District Muzaffar Garh to Mai

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1. Translation by Khushwant Singh.
2. Gurbilas Padshahi 6 gives sambat 1686, A.D. 1629 as the date of death of Bhai Gurdas. Sant Sampuran Singh assigned 1630 A.D. as his death. These dates cannot be accepted because Bhai Gurdas was alive during these years. Jiwan Baba Buddha and Kahan Singh, in Mahan Kosh give 1694 BK. (1637 A.D.) as the date of death but during this year Guru Hargobind was at Kiratpur while Bhai Gurdas passed away before Gujri went to Kiratpur. So the prabable last year of Bhai Gurdas is A.D. 1631.

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Das and his wife Mudri Bai. Much is not known about his childhood but one thing is almost certain that his sensibilities were shaped by the environment which was essentially Sikh because of the deep faith of his parents and brothers in Sikhism. According to Bhat Vahis Talauda Bhai Mani Singh's grandfather Ballu had died at Amritsar in A.D. 1634 fighting against the Mughal forces on behalf of Guru Hargobind. In A.D. 1654, it was for the first time that he got chance to have the first contact with Sikh movement when he was taken by his father to Guru Har Rai at Kiratpur. Guru Har Rai's piety, his hallowed personality, and his meaningful utterances moved him so much that his heart began to overflow with devotion for the Guru. Henceforth, he began to serve the Guru and his successors in various capacities. At the age of fifteen, he was married to Sato Bai, the daughter of celebrated Lakhi Shah who, later on, cremated the headless body of Guru Tegh Bahadur at great personal risk.

Shortly after marriage, he, along with his elder brothers, Dayala and Jetha came to Kiratpur. The way he conducted himself at Kiratpur was atonce impressive and expressive of his love for the cause. He, unhesitatingly and regularly cleansed the utensils in the kitchen, served meals to the people and listened to the instructions of the Guru. This being so, he rose in the estimation of the Guru. The Sikhs also began to adore him.

At the death of Guru Har Rai, Bhai Mani Singh decided to stay on at Kiratpur to serve Guru Har Krishan, the successor to Guru Har Rai. According to the author of Shahid Bilas, he was one of the privileged few who accompanied Guru Har Krishan to Delhi. He served the Guru to the best of his capacity and capability till the Guru passed away (March 30, 1664).

Bhai ji came to Bakala along with Mata Sulakhni, the mother of the late Guru. At that time he was running the 20th year of his age. He was in the prime of his youth, but despite this, he was mature far beyond his age and his advice mattered. When Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed at Delhi in A.D. 1675, Bhai ji was at Anandpur with Guru Gobind Singh. He saw for himself the deputation of sixteen Kashmiri Brahmans supplicating the Guru Tegh Bahadur to save them from the onslaught of Aurangzebian communal Imperialism. He also witnessed the preparation of the Guru to go to Aurangzeb probably to make him understand the futility of his stand vis-a-vis the non-Muslims. He also experienced the agony when, in response to the order of the Mughal authorities, the Guru was

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arrested at Malikpur Rangharan and taken to Sirhind wherefrom, after four months of imprisonment, he was removed to Delhi. Mani Singh put up with all this full with equipoise.

Up to this time, Bhai Mani Singh had known fully the different facets of the Sikh movement, its rationale, its objectives and reactions it had evoked in the minds of the Mughal authorities. Besides this, he had equipped himself to be classed as first rate scholar. He had acquired knowledge of Sikh scriptures by attending regularly the congregations to be addressed by Guru Har Rai, and Guru Tegh Bahadur. He had the mastery of the languages such as Braj Bhasha, Panjabi and Sanskrit. It is possible, for much of his learning, he owed to the teachers of Guru Gobind Singh with whom he had intimate association. He also learnt military tactics, handling of weapons and management of men during battles. According to Sewa Singh,[1] he was also a great warrior.

Guru Gobind Singh loved Bhai Mani Singh and assigned him those tasks which involved high degree of responsibility. In 1678 A.D. Bhai ji was asked to prepare copies of Adi Granth, the task which was obviously important because firstly its fulfilment was sure to deal a heavy blow to the prestige of Dhir Mal who was in possession of the original copy and was unwilling to loan out to Guru Gobind Singh, and secondly if the word of the Guru was precious, the Guru must offer them the opportunity to be in tune with it. Thus at the age of thirty-five, Bhai ji emerged as a great scholar, poised to undertake the important job of preparing copies of Adi Granth.

Bhai Mani Singh accompanied Guru Gobind Singh to Nahan in A.D. 1687. According to Shahid Bilas the Bhai was one of the important poets of the Guru's court.

Bhai ji had the privilege of accompanying Guru Gobind Singh when he went to Dehra Dun on the seventeenth day after the death of Ram Rai to condole with Panjab Kaur, the wife of Baba Ram Rai. Next year, the Guru sent fifty elect Sikhs to attend the function in connection with the death anniversary of Ram Rai. One of the fifty Sikhs was Bhai Mani Singh.

In A.D. 1691, Guru Gobind Singh appointed him as his Dewan, in which capacity he had to attend to variegated duties.

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1. Refer to Shahid Bilas by Sewa Singh edited by Giani Garja Singh.

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Inspite of his pre-occupation with the work of Dewan, he was very regular in giving discourses to convey the meaning of hymns of the Gurus. It appears that his method of the transmission of the utterances of the Guru was proved to be so effective that, in course of time, a definite school of the Sikh Thought, popularly known as Giani Sampardai (Giani School of Thought) emerged. In 1699 A.D., on the occasion of the creation of the Khalsa, after the five Beloved ones, Mani Singh received baptism from Guru Gobind Singh and became Mani Singh. Bhai ji's five sons were also initiated into the order of the Khalsa by administering Amrit to them.

Amritsar had long been in the hands of the rival Sodhis. Guru Tegh Bahadur had not been allowed to enter the Hari Mandir. When in A.D. 1699. Guru Gobind Singh sent out several batches of the Sikhs to preach the Khalsa way (Sainapat, Sri Gur Sobha 48) Bhai Mani Singh was commissioned to take over the Hari Mandir. He soon made Amritsar the centre for the Khalsa. According to Sewa Singh, he discarded much that was made vogue in Hari Mandir by the rival Sodhis to strengthen their own cause. According to Sodhi Darbari,[1] 'except regarding Prithi Chand, Meharban and Harji as the sixth, seventh and eighth Gurus, no other change in the routine programme of Hari Mandir was made by the Sodhis.'

Mani Singh used to come to Anandpur off and on along with Sangat to be enlightened by the tenth Guru himself. On the eve of the first battle of Anandpur (Ist September, 1700) Mani Singh who was with the Guru was asked to take part in the ensuing battle. His son Bachittar Singh and Udey Singh also participated in the battle. Vir Singh Bal in his book "Singh Sagar Chapter 11" says that the Guru called Bhai ji, gave him sword, shield and arrows and sent him to the battle-field. In this battle, Bhai ji as also his three sons showed remarkable valour.

When hill chiefs were despaired of capturing Anandpur, they appealed to the Guru's sense of chivalry by requesting him to leave Anandpur to them as gao-bhet, that is, the food for the cow. The Guru left Anandpur and established himself at Nirmoh. But Raja Bhim Chand threw to winds all the promises and assisted by Wazir Chand attacked the Guru. A fierce battle took place. All his sons[2] played their part well.

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1. Guru Prithi Chand Gur Bansawali, p. 7.
2. Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, Rut 4, Ansu 45.

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The Guru felt pleased at their performance and honoured them by awarding them a special letter of appreciation (Hukamnama).[1]

At the time of evacuation of Anandpur by Guru Gobind Singh in December 1704, Mani Singh followed the Guru. When on the bank of river Sarsa, the Guru was suddenly attacked at night by Mughal forces, all were scattered in different sides. The Guru's mother and his two youngest sons went in one direction. The Guru's wives, Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devi, followed another route. Mani Singh immediately joined the ladies. He led them along the bank to a distance where they changed their clothes to give a look of peasant-women. Thus disguised, he led them across the river the following day when the flood water had subsided. He guided them to Ambala. His aim was to take them to Nahan, the capital of the friendly Raja in whose territory the Guru had spent three years at Paonta. But since the streams en route were flooded on account of heavy rains, he made straight to Delhi, and posing himself as a Muslim stayed in Matya Mahal, a purely Muslim locality even upto now out of sheer necessity for security.

When he got wind of the Guru's station at Talwandi Saboke, now called Damdama, he along with Guru's wives reached there and contributed his best to the process of the re-organisation of the Khalsa as also to the literary activities conducted at the instance of the Guru himself.

Having spent one year and a half at Damdama the Guru decided to leave for the Deccan to see Aurangzeb. Bhai Mani Singh was one of the few Sikhs who accompanied the Guru.

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1. The Hukamnama is in the custody of Giani Garja Singh.

ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਭਾਈ ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ॥ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ॥ ਭਾਈ ਅਨਿਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ॥ ਭਾਈ ਅਜਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ॥ ਭਾਈ ਅਜਾਇਬ ਸਿੰਘ ॥ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਮਾਈ ਦਾਸ—ਵੇਖਿ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਸਰਮ ਰਖੇਗਾ ॥ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਫਰਜੰਦਹ ਖਾਨ ਜਾਦ ਹੋ ॥ ਤੁਸਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਮੇਰੀ ਖੁਸੀ ਹੈ। ਸਭ ਵਰਤਾਰੇ ਕੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮਹਿਰਮ ਹੋ। ਹੋਰ ਕੌਡੀ ਦਮੜੀ ਪੈਸਾ ਧੇਲਾ ਰੁਪੈਆ ਰਛਿਆ ਦਾ। ਜੋ ਅਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੇਹਿਗਾ ॥ ਇਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਪੁਤ੍ਰ ਫਰਜੰਦ ਹੈਸਿ ॥ ਹਿ ਖਾਂ ਪੁਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਾਦਾ ਵਲਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਲੋਚ ਕੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੋਗੇ ਤੁਸਾਡੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਦਰਗਹਿ ਥਾਇ ਪਵੈਗੀ। ਤੁਸਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਰਛਿਆ ਕਰੇਗਾ।

ਸੰਮਤ 1760 ਮਿਤੀ 2321

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At Baghaur[1], the Guru learnt that the Emperor was no more. He changed his programme and turned towards Delhi. He joined the new Emperor, Bahadur Shah, at Agra in July 1707. Mata Sundari was left in Delhi, while Mata Sahib Kaur accompanied him. Bhai Mani Singh remained in attendance upon the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh passed away at Nander on October 17, 1708. Bhai Mani Singh was present there. He escorted Mata Sahib Kaur to Delhi where she lived with Mata Sundari for the rest of her life.

Shortly afterwards, Bhai ji returned to Amritsar with specific purpose of relieving the Sikhs of the sadness which had gripped them because of the death of their Guru. Bhai ji assuaged them, encouraged them and revitalised them. The method employed to this purpose was to make them realise their own greatness and the greatness of the Gurus by relating to them the stories of the heroic efforts of the Gurus to fight the evil. On the Baisakhi day in 1709, Bhai ji not only ensured a huge gathering by issuing letter far and wide but also he made incumbent on himself that they should be apprised of the latest development.

In April 1709, Bhai Mani Singh had to fight against Chaudhri Deva who was commanding *Mulkias* and his own force. The cause of the battle was that one Ramu Mal follower of Sodhi Niranjan picked up a quarrel with the Sikhs over a trifle and to prove his superiority he approached Aslam Khan the Nazim of Lahore who ordered Har Sahai, the faujdar of Patti to punish the Sikhs. Har Sahai at once proceeded to implement the order but was killed by Tara Singh Van in an encounter. Ramu Mal's father Chuhar Mal again approached the Nazim. He sent Chaudhri Deva to punish the Sikhs. Bhai Mani Singh and the Sikhs fought so bravely that the enemy had to flee from the field. The victory of Bhai Mani Singh exploded the myth of the invincibility of the Mughal rule. This thing created new confidence among the Sikhs.

When Banda Bahadur, piqued up at the murderous assault on Guru Gobind Singh and goaded by the desire to consummate the ideals of Sikhism declared open defiance of the Mughal authority, the Government reacted to it and took

1. According to Shahid Bilas by Sewa Singh, Bhai ji returned to Amritsar from Baghaur.

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stringent measures against the Şikhs. Many Sikhs who were putting up with Bhai ji[1] at Hari Mandir left him out of fear of the wrath of the government. Bhai ji, however, remained unshaken and continued to do his duty at Hari Mandir as assiduously as he used to do earlier.

In 1714-15, Bhai ji undertook proselytizing tour of the District Jhang of Panjab. He sojourned for sometime at village Baga-Wala at the place where now Gurdwara 'Nanaksar' stands and related the story of Guru Hargobind. Shortly after, Bhai ji returned to Amritsar.[2]

The defeat and execution of Banda had adverse effect on tha body-social of the Sikhs. The Khalsa were divided between the 'Bandai' who wished to deify Banda and 'Tat Khalsa' who while revering the memory of their leader, disapproved of the attempt to apotheosize him. The differences between the two groups found expression in the matters of trivial detail, but, as is usual with frustrated people, the trivialities assumed unwarranted importance. This led to squabbling and then an open fight to gain control over the Hari Mandir in Amritsar. The position became serious. Bhai Mani Singh was then in charge of Hari Mandir. He decided the case in a simple way. On two pieces of paper he wrote the words 'Tat Khalsa' and 'Bandai Khalsa'. The papers were rolled up into a ball and thrown into the holy tank of Har ki Pauri. The paper bearing the name Tat Khalsa came up the water first, and the holy places were immediately handed over to 'Tat Khalsa'. The fact that Bhai ji prevailed upon the aforesaid warring groups to agree to the solution as stated above bears eloquent testimony to the deft handling of the delicate issues and speak volumes of his understanding of men and matters.

During these years and after, the unflinching faith which Bhai Mani Singh showed in the Guru's mission served as a source of inspiration and encouragement to others. He reassured the Sikhs that there was no cause for anxiety, because the message of Nanak had a divine sanction behind it and was therefore imperishable. He looked to the future for a new dawn of Sikh Power, thus dispelling the despondency into which the followers of Guru Gobind Singh had fallen after A.D. 1716.

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1. This information has been culled from the letter which Mata Sundari received on April 1710 (22 Baisakh).
2. The exact date of the return of Bhai ji to Amritsar is not known.

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As has it been in the foregoing passages, Bhai ji was a brave soldier and had taken part in the battles of Bhangani, Nadaun, and Anandpur. From this experience arose his attitude and philosophy of resistance. The attainment of sovereignty and the establishment of just rule was the mission of the Khalsa Panth. Bhai ji vouchsafed that this was laid down by the Guru himself and willed by God.[1] In order to hasten the liquidation of the Mughal rule, the Khalsa must seriously take to 'Danga', a sort of a guerrilla warfare as the most effective method of resistance suited to a numerically inferior people. The objective of the Khalsa was the acquisition of sovereign status. Possessed of this belief, the Khalsa Panth refused to identify itself with the existing state and cheerfully made sacrifices with the hope of establishing their own independent power.

Obviously, Bhai Mani Singh's activities could not be tolerated for long by the existing political establishment whose head was Zakariya Khan. In 1733, the leaders of the Sikhs met at Akal Takht to decide whether or not they should accept the offer of Jagir from the Government. In the course of discussion one significant argument was put forth which was that the Khalsa being sovereign by the grace of their Guru and God could not accept such an offer from a power which they did not recognise. This argument clearly reflected the philosophy of Bhai Mani Singh. In all probability, the matter was reported to Zakariya Khan who must have heen angered at this.

The writing on the wall in the case of Bhai ji was clear, but Zakariya took his own time.

The Mughal Government of Lahore had strictly forbidden Sikhs to visit Amritsar and bathe in the holy tank. On all sides of the city, strong contingents were posted to arrest Sikhs approaching their sacred shrines.

In October 1734, just before Diwali, Bhai Mani Singh applied to the Government that the Sikhs might be allowed to attend the Diwali fair for a tribute of Rs. 5000. Permission was granted, but the real object of the Government was to destroy the Sikhs en-bloc. Bhai Mani Singh, ignorant of this, sent messages all over the Panjab inviting the Sikhs to celebrate the Diwali fair. Soon after, Bhai ji sensed the nefarious designs

1. Gur Bilas Pat Shahi 6, pp. 76, 128, 280, 288, by Sohan.

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of the Government and informed the Sikhs not to visit Amritsar on the Diwali Day.

No fair was held and no offerings came. Bhai Mani Singh who had planned to pay five thousand rupees out of the offerings could not do so, nor had he any other source of income to make payment. The Government demanded the promised fee. Mani Singh blamed the Government for not allowing the Sikhs to assemble on the Diwali day. The Government arrested him in 1734 and took him to Lahore. The Qazi pronounced the judgement and he was cut to pieces limb by limb.

Bhai Mani Singh's martyrdom furthered the cause for which he had been patiently labouring throughout his life. His idea that the Khalsa must possess sovereign power received baptism of martyr's blood and became part of the psyche of the nation.

BHAI JAITA

The Sikh religion up to the time of Guru Gobind Singh had caught the imagination of the Panjab and outside. The down-trodden section of the people which is always the biggest one in the feudal social structure was specially attracted towards it because of its emphasis on ameliorating the condition of the people both on social and economic planes. If statistical data is considered to be a reliable pointer, it can be safely surmised that the people whom the Gurus met or about whom he spoke were mostly the poor, the down-trodden and the so-called low caste people. The Gurus focalised notice of such people led him to the framing of ideology whose focal point was such people. Hence the emergence of such people as the staunchest supporter of the Gurus was a must, and no wonder, Bhai Jaita served the cause of the Guru even at the risk of his life like so many others of his social status.

Who Bhai Jaita was has been a matter of great controversy. Shri Gill has tried to prove that he was a son of Sada Nand, a Brahmin who was employed as an astrologer in the court of Aurangzeb and who belonged to Mathura. Sardar Gill quotes from 'Sisnama' a book written by Giani Chatur Singh. But the view is wrong because Chatur Singh does not quote any source. Moreover there are certain indefensible facts which inhere the description of Bhai Jaita by Giani Chatur Singh. Giani ji says, "that day Sada Nand went to Aurangzeb to give his predictions. Before doing so, he recited a Shabad upon which Aurangzeb lost temper, ordered him to get off. Sada's father, Jas Bhan turned him out of his house making out to the people that he had turned mad."

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The story suffers from serious snags. In the first instance Aurangzeb did not like to consult any Hindu astrologer and secondly no astrologer of the name of Sada is mentioned in any contemporary records. So far as the recitation of Shabad is concerned, it contains nothing which can annoy anybody. Moreover, had he been a Brahman or a Khatri, there was no need on the part of the Guru to call him 'Rangretta Guru ka Beta.' In that case, he would have said "Brahmin or Kshatriya Guru ka beta." In fact, Bhai Jaita belonged to scavenger's class and Rangretta is the name given to it and they are called by this name even today in different parts of the Panjab.

Which place did he belong to is also a matter of controversy among the scholars. Chatur Singh says, "that his parents belonged to Mathura." Professor Kartar Singh regard shim as the inhabitant of Ramdaspur near Amritsar. Prof. Kartar Singh mentions that Sada left Ramdaspur in the wake of the death of his beloved wife, Bibi Premo along with his infant son Jaita and went to Bakala at the time when as a result of the efforts of Makhan Shah and others, the fictitious Gurus were fully exposed and constrained to leave Bakala. There he embraced Sikhism and became a devout Sikh of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Though we have not come across any contemporary or semi-contemporary evidence, yet the tradition of Ramdas being the cradle place of Bhai Jaita is too strong to be brushed aside.

Recently we have come across the following entry in Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi which records that Bhai Jaita's father's name was Agya Ram who was the resident of Mohalla Dilwali Sikhan Delhi. In view of this, evident conclusion may be drawn that Bhai Jaita belonged to Delhi and his father was not Sada but some other man. But a little probe into matter will bring into relief the reality. In fact Bhai Agya, after the death of his wife began to live a life of resignation, self-absorbed and oblivious of the world around. People often unable to penerate into the real self of the man began to call him 'Sada', the simpletan.

After his visit to Bakala, Sada decided to pass his days while rendering service to the Guru and thereafter he seemed to have always been in attendance upon the Guru. Bhai Jaita also remained in the court of the Guru, of course, with his father. All Sikh records say that when Jaita was taken to Baba Bakala by Agya, he was yet a child. If childhood is assigned 5 years or a little more, it means that he had the privilege of long company

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of Guru Tegh Bahadur upto the age of seventeen. During these years, he must have imbibed the requisite spirit of espousing the cause of Sikhism. Whether he accompanies the Guru in his tours, nothing can be said with certainty, but there is every possibility that he was with the Guru when he left Kiratpur for tours to the places in the north and west of India. On way back to Kiratpur, it seems that Bhai Agya and his son Jaita decided to settle at Mohalla Dilwali, Delhi. Bhai Jaita, as also his father, being dedicated Sikhs, took to preaching the Guru's Gospel and they were quite well-known, having intimate contact with all important Sikhs including Lakhi Shah and his sons.

Bhai Jaita used to come to Anandpur off and on to keep himself abreast of the latest instructions of the Guru and when Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested and taken to Delhi, Bhai Jaita came to Anandpur to pay his homage to the young Guru, Gobind Singh and also to apprise him of the situation and the mind of the Mughal Government. Whether Guru Gobind Singh gave him certain instructions or not, one thing is clear that he must have gone back to Delhi, fully inspired and duly determined to do his best to serve the cause of the Guru.

The fateful day came on November 11, 1675 and executioner's sword severed the head of the Guru. The headless body and the head lay in front of Kotwali in the Chandni Chowk which used to be the most thronged place in the city. The plan of the government was to cut the body into four pieces and to quarter them on all sides of Delhi. Bhai Jaita could not withstand all this. Bhai Nanu a washerman Sikh, also of Dilwali Gate, also felt like Jaita. Both of them met each other. Bhai Agya also took part in the deliberation. According to Banswali Nama and Bhat Vahis, Bhai Nanu picked up the head, went home and asked Bhai Jaita to do the needful. Jaita wrapped the head in a piece of cloth, put the sacred head in a basket and covered it with flowers. He, regardless of the danger of the Mughal pursuers and caring little for physica inconvenience ran towards Anandpur. He was accompanied by his father and Nanu. On the way, he stopped at four places viz Sonepat, Ambala, Nabha (near Chandigarh) and Kiratpur. At Kiratpur Guru Gobind Singh received the hallowed head of his father, took it with all reverence to Anandpur where it was consigned to fire. Guru Gobind Singh was so much moved at the courage and devotion of Bhai Jaita that he took him in tight embrace, kissed him and announced 'Rengretta Guru ka Beta' i.e. to say 'Bhai Jaita is the son of the Guru.'

Since then Bhai Jaita had started living at Anandpur. The Guru was all affection for him, and had full faith in his

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capability to further Guru's cause. The archaeological evidence is pertinent at this point. At Anandpur, there is a building known as Tap Asthan 'place of meditation' of Bhai Jaita, very close to Guru Gobind Singh's dwelling place. No other Sikh had his house as near as Bhai Jaita's. This thing leads us to conclude that Guru Gobind Singh had special regard for Jaita. Tradition says that Bhai Jaita not only used to meditate and reflect on Guru's word but also gave lessons on Sikhism to the people. 'Tap Asthan' in Sikh context does not mean a place of an ascetic, rather by this is meant the place where Sikh culture is imbibed and steps taken to inculcate it among the people.

Bhai Jaita witnessed variegated activities of Guru Gobind Singh at Paonta and possibly it was here that Bhai Jaita became an adept in the art of archery, gunnary, swordsmanship and horsemanship.

In the battle of Bhangani and various other battles which Guru Gobind Singh fought, Jaita played his part well. In the absence of any recorded account, it is not possible for us to give any details of his acts of bravery, yet it is irrefutable that he was one of the greatest generals of the Guru's army.

On March 30, 1699, when Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the order of the Khalsa he took 'Khande ki Pahul' and was then given a new name, Jiwan Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh evacuated Anandpur on the night of 6-7 Poh Samvat 1762 B.K. (5-6 December, 1705). The moment the enemy got wind of the departure of the Sikhs, they forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit immediately. Skirmishes commenced from Kiratpur onwards. Realizing the impending danger, Guru Gobind Singh gave a band of 50 men to Bhai Udey Singh and charged him with the responsibility of checking the enemy's advancement. Bhai Udey Singh fought at Shahi Tibbi with the enemy with a handful of men; all of them perished fighting covering themselves with imperishable glory.

When the battle of Shahi Tibbi was in progress, Guru Gobind Singh, along with the rest of Caravan lost no time to reach the bank of Sarsa river. Bhai Jaita was with the Guru, advancing and planning.

About this time, the news arrived that a contingent of enemy troops was fast approaching and was likely to launch an attack in a short time. The river was in high flood at that

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time, and it was apprehended that in the eventuality of an attack from the enemy, it would become all the more difficult to cross it. Under the circumstances, it was considered imperative by the Guru to set apart a Jatha out of his Sikhs for checking the further advance of the enemy. The choice of the leadership of the Jatha fell on Bhai Jiwan Singh who proved himself worthy of the trust reposed in him by the Master. The Bhai and his brave 100 companions offered a stout and stubborn resistance to the enemy and all of them died martyrs. Sarup Singh Kaushak, the author of 'Guru Kian Sakhian, records as under :—

"A momentous battle was fought on the bank of Sarsa, the arrows of Bhai Jiwan Singh brought havoc upon the enemies. All the Sikhs fought gallantly with a total disregard of their lives. A large number of the Turks were killed in the battle-field. A hard contest took place between the two parties for half pahar (four and a half hours). Then suddenly as a result of a volley of matchlocks Jiwan Singh was shot in his forehead. His departing words were 'Wah Guru Ji ki Fateh'. By the sun rise, all the Sikhs had lost their lives".[1]

BHAI NAND LAL

Bhai Nand Lal was one of those blessed Sikhs who had the good fortune of receiving the patronage and guidance of Guru Gobind Singh. He was born in A.D. 1633 at Agra. His father was Diwan Chhajju Ram who, because of his erudite scholarship in Persian and Arabic, was much liked by Dara Shikoh. When Dara was sent to Qandhar to subjugate it, he took Chhajju Ram alongwith him, appointing him to the post of Chief Secretary (Mir Munshi). Sometime after, Dara Shikoh returned to Agra but Chhajju Ram chose to remain at Ghazni working against the post of Mir Munshi of the Governor of Ghazni.

He had great attachment for Nand Lal, perhaps it was because of the fact that he was born in the later years of his life. All

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1. ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੇਟਾ ਆਗਿਆ ਕਾ, ਪੋਤਾ ਦੁਲੂ ਕਾ, ਬਾਸੀ ਦਿੱਲੀ, ਮਹਲਾ ਦਿਲਵਾਲੀ ਸੌ ਸਿਖੋਂ ਕੋ ਗ਼ੋਲ ਲੈ ਸੰਬਤ ਸਤ੍ਰਾ ਸੈ ਬਾਸਠ ਪਖੋ ਮਾਸੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਦੂਜ ਵੀਰਵਾਰ ਨੇ ਦਿਹੁੰ, ਸਰਸਾ ਨਦੀ ਦੇ ਤੀਰ ਰਾਜਾ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਚੰਦ ਬੇਟਾ ਭੀਮ ਚੰਦ ਕਾ, ਪੋਤਾ ਦੀਪ ਚੰਦ ਕਾ ਪੜਪੋਤਾ ਤਾਰਾ ਚੰਦਾ ਕਾ, ਬੰਸ ਕਲਿਆਣ ਚੰਦ, ਚੰਦੇਲ ਗੋਤਰ ਰਾਣੇ ਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਗੈਲ ਦਸ ਘਰੀਆਂ ਜੂਝ ਕੈ ਸਾਮ੍ਹੇ ਮਾਥੇ ਸਹਾਦਤ ਪਾਈ। ਆਗੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਭਾਣੇ ਕਾ ਖਾਵਿੰਦ, ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਜਾਣੇ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਣਾ ਜਨਮ ਸਉਰੇਗਾ।

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possible arrangements were made to ensure good education to the boy. Chhajju Ram himself spared time to give lessons to his son. Shortly, Nand Lal acquired efficiency in Persian and Arabic and could compose verses in Persian at the age of twelve.

Diwan Chhajju Ram was a devout Vaishnavite, although he was not parochial in his religious outlook. Naturally Nand Lal was nourished on the liberal religious views of his father. There was another element that entered into his psyche. During these days, the Sikhs all over northern India and Afghanistan had established their Sangats where they used to pray and discuss spiritual-cum-social views of the Gurus. Bhai Nand Lal came into contact with these Sangats and could not escape the impact of Sikhism which, of course, at the time, was in germinal form.

When Nand Lal grew of age, his father, true to Vaishnavite tradition, asked him to wear around his neck a piece of wood. Nand Lal refused to oblige his father saying that he would wear that rosary whose beads are unbreakable and guarantee real contentment. The father was astonished and failed to convince the boy.

When Bhai ji reached sixteen years of age, his mother died. Three years after, his father also breathed his last. Bhai Nand Lal, as per custom, expected the post of his father. He tried for it but the Governor of Ghazni was not willing to oblige him and instead offered him a petty post of a clerk. Bhai ji declined the offer because he did not consider this post in commensurate with his ability and the status of his family. Bhai Nand Lal had no high-placed patron to recommend his case. Dara Shikoh had left Ghazni and Bhai ji did not know that he would visit Ghazni again in A.D. 1653 at the head of third expedition meant to reconquer Qandhar.

Thus finding himself helpless, Nand Lal decided to leave Ghazni. He sold the property which he had inherited and reached Multan alongwith his two brothers and two loyal Pathan servants. He selected Multan for his residence. The choice was a happy one. The city was a great centre of trade and possessed great political importance.

He built a house outside Delhi Gate where quite a few rich Khatris were already living. As the time rolled by, more houses came into being and the place developed into a big Mohalla.

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His Pathan servants who were all devotion for Bhai ji used to call him by the epithet 'Aqha' which meant 'Lord'. Soon Bhai ji became very popular—so much so that the Mohalla where he resided began to be called 'Aqapur'. Sir Edward Maclagan[1] says that Mohalla, long before the advent of Nand Lal in the city had borne such name, but we do not agree with him, The reasons are not far to seek. In the first instance, for the Mughals the word 'Aqa' was never used and secondly, the suffix 'Pur' is a word of Hindi language.

Shortly after his arrival at Multan, the fame of the scholarship of Nand Lal began to spread. Nawal Wassaf Khan much impressed by Bhai ji's integrity and learning, appointed him to the post of *munshi* in which capacity he worked with distinction and won approbation from all quarters.

After this, he was made the incharge of the fort of Bhakkar. He collected the arrears of revenue from the zamindars of the area and remitted the same to Multan treasury. Soon after, he was made Nazim of Dina, Kehror, Fatehpur and Pargana Mahayyaud-din Pur. He acquitted himself nicely even at this post. The next post which he held was that of Naib Subedar or the Deputy Governor of Multan. About the period of his deputy governorship, no reliable source throws any light and hence it is difficult for us to say anything on this issue.

According to 'Dastur-ul-Insha', the book written by Bhai ji himself, he, as Nazim, made his mark as a military general also. He led a punitive expedition against a notorious dacoit, Sahu who had seven hundred bad characters to support him in his nefarious designs of disturbing peace and committing acts of dacoity. Sahu was arrested and nearly half of his followers were slain.

The dissolution of Sahu's gang not only enhanced the prestige of Bhai ji but also provided atmosphere for the peaceful citizens to progress economically. Besides this, Bhai ji constrained the zamindars to stand surety for the safe passage to the caravans coming into or going from Multan. By this step the volume of foreign trade swelled with the result that the internal trade was also stepped up correspondingly.

According to Dr. Ganda Singh 'Bhai ji served the state in different capacities for about thirty years. He got the chance of serving Prince Salim and Prince Mohammed Akbar (1678-79).'

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1. Refer to *Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali*, edited by Dr. Ganda Singh, p. 12, 1968.

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During the regime of Aurangzeb, Bhai ji was turned out of Government service. The exact reasons for his dismissal are not known, but the probable conjecture is that he had to quit because of his father's good relations with Dara Shikoh, the fact which was unbearable for Aurangzeb.

All the same, subsequent period of his life was fruitful to him in another way. He discovered himself. He came into contact with the Sikh movement and its captain Guru Gobind Singh who wrought a transformation of his psyche. Bhai Nand Lal saw new heights, new horizons, new mountains and new seas. His poetry found new stimuli, symbolised new ideas. The fulcrum of his activities became Guru Gobind Singh, the lord of plume, the lord of Blue steed and the beloved hero of the emaciated humanity.

He went to Anandpur, the seat of Guru Gobind Singh. He saw for himself the Guru, his multi-farious activities, operating with finesse to bring about new awakening among the people and endeavouring to shape new values to fit in the general framework of the society of his ideas. His intellect quickened, his sensibility sharpened, his self responded to his generous gestures and he became beau ideal of a Sikh, embodying the Sikh ethos in its totality.

All out for the Guru's cause, Bhai ji decided to live at the court of the Guru.

After some time, Bhai ji went to Agra where in 1695, he got the post of Mir Munshi of Prince Muazzam who had, just after his release from the prison, assumed the charge of subedar of the province of Agra. However, Bhai ji was not destined to work at this post for long.

It is said that once Aurangzeb asked the interpretation of certain excerpt from Al-Quran. Various intepretations were presented to the Emperor, but the version forwarded by Prince Muazzam was considered to be the most appropriate by Aurangzeb. On probe, he came to know that it was Bhai Nand Lal who had interpreted. Aurangzeb felt upset because he did not like a Kafir's mastery over the sacred text. He suggested that such a man of learning should be converted to Islam. In a public Durbar, Nand Lal was awarded a robe of honour and a cash prize of Rs. 500.

When Aurangzeb's secret desire came to Bhai Nand Lal's knowledge, he felt perturbed. There were only two courses

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left for him. He could either embrace Islam or go elsewhere. The former cause was rejected by him forthwith because he had, to all intents and purposes, entered into Sikh fold. The second course was not practical for him. He atonce packed up, begged leave of the Prince and reached Lahore. Here he met his pupil, Ghiasud-din, the Darogha of Agra who had come on leave to this place. Both of them reached Anandpur. Ghiasuddin returned to Lahore after some time, but Bhai Nand Lal continued to stay at Anandpur upto 1705.

During this period Bhai Nand Lal drank deep in the fountain of Sikh spiritual thought as enshrined in Adi Granth. He listened to the sacred utterances of the Guru. He keenly observed the Sikh way of life and understood the ultimate goal of the Sikh movement. The inauguration of the order of the Khalsa was also noted by him.

All those things and the splendid personality of Guru Gobind Singh constituted environment wherein Nand Lal's poetic genius quickened and flowered. Bhai ji produced books of Persian poetry. The first book of poetry which he presented to the Guru bore the title 'Bandgi Nama' which was changed to 'Zindgi Nama' by Guru Gobind Singh. The Guru wrote the following verse at the end of the book :

Ab-e-hai-vān pur shud, chun jām-e-o
Zindgi Nāmah shud, Bandgi Namah-e-o

(When his goblet was filled with the water of life,
His Bandgi Namah became Zindgi Namah).

The Guru offered him the post of Diwan, but Nand Lal very politely declined the offer, saying that he was fully satisfied with his service in Guru's kitchen.

At Anandpur there were several free community messes for the poor and the needy. One day all the nobles began to praise their own free kitchens. Guru Gobind Singh in disguise of a rustic called at everyone of them and he found only Nand Lal's Langar (kitchen) working properly.

One day during Nand Lal's sojourn at Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh came to know that his wife and children were living at Multan in his father-in-law's house. The Guru offered to issue Hukamnama (fiat) in the name of the Sangats of Multan and the area around to send their daswandh (one tenth of their income) to his family members. Bhai ji thanked the Guru for

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all this and requested that no order in this respect should be issued, only they should be blessed to earn their livelihood through honest means.

In 1705, when the Guru had to evacuate Anandpur, Bhai ji was with the Guru. But when the Mughal forces in combination with the hill forces attacked the Guru on the bank of the river Sarsa, Bhai ji, as also many other Sikhs, got separated from Guru Gobind Singh.

How did he pass the year of 1706, no one knows but this much is certain that in A.D. 1707 after the death of Aurangzeb Bhai ji went to Prince Muazzam who upto this time had occupied the Mughal throne at Agra under the name of Bahadur Shah.

Even after occupying the throne, Bahadur Shah was not feeling comfortable because Prince Azam was threatening and was advancing at the head of a force from the Deccan to the North India. At this critical juncture Bhai Nand Lal approached Guru Gobind Singh for active assistance for Bahadur Shah. Guru Gobind Singh acceded to the request and ordered his three hundred armed Sikhs to fight for Bahadur Shah whose right to throne seemed legitimate to him. Some scholars are puzzled at this gesture of the Guru, for they cannot find any rationale for Guru's sympathetic attitude towards Bahadur Shah whose father was responsible for the death of Guru Tegh Bahaur and varied difficulties of the Guru. But if they keep in view the mission of the Guru and then try to appreciate the policy of the Guru vis-avis Bahadur Shah, they would suffer from no contradiction whatsover. The Guru's mission was to uphold righteousness and to see that the crookedness should not flourish. Since Bahadur Shah was not illiberal in his religious policy and was right in his stand, the Guru offered his help.

Bahadur Shah won victory at Jajau on June 8, 1707. He, in token of the appreciation of the Guru's help, offered him a robe of honour and various other valuable presents.

Shortly after, Bahadur Shah had to attend to the revolt of the Kachhwaha Rajputs of Rajputana. When he had just started operation against the Rajputs, he got the news of the open revolt of his brother Kambakhsh. He atonce marched to square up with him. Guru Gobind Singh, who was negotiating with him on different issues concerning his people and the excesses committed by the Subedar Wazir Khan of Sirhind accompanied Bahadur Shah to the Deccan.

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All the time, Bhai Nand Lal was with Bahadur Shah. According to Dhadi Nab Mal writes :

ਜਿ ਵੁਜਰਾਇ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ ਬੁਢਾ ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ

ਸ਼ੁਦਾ ਹਮਰਹਿ ਸ਼ਹਿ ਵਾਲਾ ਕਮਾਲ

"Nand Lal was one of the councillors of the Emperor. He had the privilege of being a very close associate of the very fortunate Emperor."

Bhai ji must have tried his best to get justice for the Guru and his cause. Emperor's intransigence towards the demands of the Guru must have caused disappointment to him. However, he continued to serve the Emperor upto the latter's death at Lahore. In 1710 when the Emperor was given the news of Banda's anti-Mughal campaigns in the Punjab, he lost no time in marching towards Panjab. Bhai ji was in the Emperor's camp and reached Lahore along with the Emperor. Bahadur Shah expired in 1712 and Bhai ji forthwith left for Multan.

After this, Bhai ji lived only for a year, but this period of his life was marked for his fruitful activities. He established a school in which he himself imparted higher education in Persian, and Arabic. According to Bhai Parma Nand this school continued to serve the people even after the death of Bhai Sahib and when in 1849 Multan came under the occupation of the British, the school was being run by the people of Bhai Ji's family.[1] Bhai ji expired in A.D. 1713.

Bhai ji wrote ten volumes. As is clear from the diction and thought of these books, it is not difficult to surmise that Bhai ji wrote under the deep impact of Guru Gobind Singh and his philosophy. He composed verses under the pen-name of 'Goya' or 'Lal'.

Zindgi Nama

As it has been said earlier, this was the first creation of Bhai ji. The subject of this book is 'Love for God' and devotion for the Guru. For thoughts and perspective, Bhai ji copiously refers to the hymns of the Guru.

Ghazaliat

This volume is a good attempt to present the inner meanings of Guru's compositions. From the point of view of style, thought, and diction, this composition is superb.

1. Refer to the article 'Bhai Nand Lal di Jiwani and Rachna' by Bhai Parmanand Arora, M.A.

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Tosifo-Sana and Khatima

Except Khatima, which is in poetry, the whole composition is in Persian prose. Its style is marked for its verbosity and difficult diction. It contains no historical information, nor does it dwell on any theme worth consideration.

Ganj Nama

This composition is in prose as well as in poetry. In it one comes across the devotion for the Gurus with which the author seems to have saturated.

Jot Bigas

This composition is in Persian and explains at full length the doctrine of Unity in the plurality of the Guru. The first Guru had categorically rejected the doctrine of incarnation i.e. the appearance of God on earth in human shape but had studiously advocated by practical illustration the doctrine of blending his spirit with the next and so on. It is in this volume that we find Bhai Nand Lal using epithets such as Badshah Darvesh—king saint, Puran Manukh—perfect man, etc., for Guru Gobind Singh. This book is a great aid to the scholars engaged in the study of the personality of Guru Gobind Singh.

Jot Bigas (Punjabi)

This book is not the copy of the former book; although the subject matter is almost the same.

Rahat Nama and Tankhanama

According to Sardar Attar Singh of Bhadaur, both these compositions are the creations of Bhai ji, although Bhai Kahan Singh does not agree. Rahat Nama gives an account of the code of discipline to be followed by the Sikhs. This book was written on December 4-5, 1695 and hence referred to the code which was required to be observed before the creation of the Khalsa. Tankhanama was written after the creation of the Khalsa and it refers to some of oughts and don'ts which the Khalsa should observe in their day-to-day life.

Dastur-Ul-Insha (Persian Prose)

The book provides information regarding social, economic and political condition contemporaneous to Guru Gobind Singh.

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Arzul-Alfaz (Persian Poetry)

It provides abundant information regarding the spiritual currents which Sikhism had caused. In it, Bhai ji is profuse in his praise for God and Gurus. The Persian and Arabic words which Bhai ji had used are clearly manisfestative of Bhai ji's over-flowing devotion for the Guru and his deep scholarship.

MAI BHAG KAUR

Guru Arjan Dev was a vigorous preacher, besides being a great organiser and a creative genius. It was because of his proselytizing campaigns that most of the Majha people having shed off their old beliefs and embraced Sikhism. One of them was Langah, the son of Ahul Khair who was a staunch devotee of Sakhi Sarvar. As chance would have it, his friends happened to be the Sikhs under whose influence he visited Amritsar and saw Guru Arjan Dev for himself. The illumined personality of the Guru wrought transformation of his mind and he entered into the fold of Sikhism. By degrees, through his devotion and selfless service, he rose in the estimation of the Guru who began to repose full trust in him and involved him in the tasks of far-reaching importance for the nascent Sikh community. His brother Pero Shah and his nephew Malo Shah also grew to be devout Sikhs. Malo Shah was much loved by Guru Hargobind.

Mai Bhag Kaur was Malo Shah's daughter. Obviously she was brought up in the atmosphere which was suffused with Sikh culture. Admittedly, Bhag Kaur was imbued with Sikh ideas and her psyche shaped accordingly. She got the chance to have the sacred glimpse of Guru Tegh Bhadur when she was taken to Anandpur by her parents. Again she was lucky enough to be present along with other members of her family on the occasion of the installation ceremony of Guru Gobind Singh on March 30, 1699 when the Khalsa was created at Anandpur, her family members were among the first row of the people who received baptism of double-edged sword.

Immediately after the inauguration of the order of the Khalsa, people on a large scale were administered Khande-ki-Pahul. Bhag Kaur also was baptised.

In A.D. 1701, battle ensued between the Guru on one side and the hill chiefs and the Mughal Government on the other side. The war was prolonged upto 1705.

When the news of the excesses of the Hill Chiefs and the Mughal subedar of Sirhind reached the Sikhs of the Amritsar

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district they became red with moral rage. The grandsons of Duni Chand, Sardar Anup Singh and Sardar Sarup Singh got ready to participate in the war on behalf of the Guru. Mai Bhag Kaur also expressed her desire to take part in the war. Her brothers and parents did not allow her to have her way, although they themselves rushed to Anandpur to render much-needed assistance to the Guru. Many more people did the same. Though the enemy had taken precautions to disallow the Sikhs to reach Anandpur, yet they would go, sometime in disguise and sometime at great personal risk. Bhag Kaur observed all this.

In 1705, the final battle of Anandpur took place. The Sikhs fought gallantly. The siege lasted for more than seven months. The strategy of the enemy during the siege was to force the Sikhs to surrender by fully closing their access to food and water. The effects of the strategy began to be felt as the days passed.

"None could either go or come. Then how were supplies to reach where needed? Many days did pass accordingly. And the price of food did soar to a rupee per seer.

Four Sikhs would venture for water : two would battle, two would fetch the pitchers."

(Gur Sobha)

The situation deteriorated to this extent that the Sikhs did not have anything to live upon. When the enemy learnt of the distress of the Sikhs, they planned a different strategy to take advantage of the situation. They sent a message to the Guru suggesting that if he decided to abandon Anandpur, he would be allowed a safe passage. Their pledge of a safe passage was unreliable, since they planned to draw out the Sikhs from within the shelter of the township and attack them. The Guru sensed their secret motive when he received the message and therefore did not accept the suggestion. At this some the Sikhs persisted that the offer of the enemy should be accepted. When the Guru did not listen to them, they disclaimed the Guru and left for their homes.

The Guru, ultimately, had to evacuate Anandpur on 5-6 December, 1705. The moment the enemy got an inkling of the departure of the Sikhs, they forgot all about their pledges and set out in hot pursuit immediately. The Guru suffered a lot but wended his way to Chamkaur where he gave a battle to the enemy. In this battle the Guru had only forty odd soldiers

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while the enemy commanded a force running into lacs (according to Zafar Nama). All the Guru's soldiers except three suffered martyrdom. Most prominent among the Sikh martyrs were Sahibzadas Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh and three Piyaras (Beloved ones).

After this, the Guru had to move from place to place in search of security and respite for regrouping the Khalsa. While at Dina, the Guru received definite information about the determination of the Sirhind authorities to send a body of troops against him. This news also reached the Majha area of the Panjab. The self-respecting Khalsa was cut to the quick. Bhag Kaur told his husband that time had come to prove their salt for the cause of the Guru. Her husband assured her of his steadfastness and readiness to make any sacrifice in this connection.

Bhag Kaur, greatly heartened at her husband's gesture, drew her sword out of the scabbard, alighted a horse and called upon all those who had love for the Guru's cause to come forward and march to the Malwa region of the Panjab to forestall the nefarious designs of Wazir Khan. Her exhortations were specially directed at those forty persons who had come back to their homes by signing a disclaimer (ਬੇਦਾਵਾ).

Bhag Kaur's call had a magic effect. She like Joan of Arc of the French History led a band of soldiers to the *Khidrana ki Dhab* where the Guru had proposed to give a fight to the Mughal forces. On the way, she was joined by a large number of Sikhs. Some wise men from Lahore who had thought they had some influence at the Mughal Durbar also joined them.

The party met the Master between Ramiana and Khidrana. The deserters begged pardon and recommended the newcomers to his grace. The wise men advised him to give up fighting and make peace with the Emperor. They offered to act as negotiators. The Guru spurned their advice saying that it was not possible for him to make peace with tyrants. The wise men from Lahore acquiesced in quititude, and returned to their homes. The Guru continued his advance to his destination.

The rest of the party headed by Bhag Kaur and Mahan Singh of village Sur Singh Wala followed Guru Gobind Singh.

On reaching Khidrana, they found the tank dry. The master had for that reason moved on from the place. Bhai Mahan Singh proposed to engage the enemy there and to allow

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time to the Guru to reach a place of safety. Big white sheets of khaddar (coarse cloth) were spread on the shrubs so that the enemy might think the Sikhs were encamping there in a large number. Soon the Muhammadan army came up.

The Sikhs under Mai Bhag Kaur and Bhai Mahan Singh bore the brunt of the enemy's attack. All the Sikh soldiers fought with their usual courage and power. Mai Bhag Kaur was seen fighting in the foremost rank. The Mughal soldiers did their best to overpower the Sikhs and advance towards the Guru who from a place of eminence was aiming arrows on the prominent persons of the enemy forces, but they did not succeed. Mai Bhago's movements were not only heartening to the soldiers but also manifestative of the resurgence of the Sikh ladies which had taken place under the dynamic leadership of the Guru.

The Sikhs, having exhausted their ammunition and queer of arrows, were obliged to have recourse of their spears and the swords. Small bands advanced, engaged the enemies in hand to hand fights, killed several times their number, until many of them were killed or seriously injured. They themselves were incapacitated to carry on the fight. They did not win victory, nor were they fighting for it, their aim being the vindication of their faith in the Guru's cause and win over the pleasure of the Guru. All the same, they did succeed in constraining the Mughal forces to retrace their steps to their headquarter.

After they had gone, the Guru visited the scene of battle, and with a fatherly affection went about lifting the heads of the martyrs in his lap wiping their faces, and blessing them one by one. When it was the turn of Bhai Mahan Singh to be thus caressed and blessed, the Master found that there was still some life in him. After a while, Bhai Mahan Singh opened his eyes, and found himself in the lap of the Master. He was filled with supreme joy. The Guru asked him if he had any desire to be fulfilled, Bhai Mahan Singh said, "No, father.[1] I have seen thee. What else or more could I desire? But if thou has taken compassion on us here, then tear off our disclaimer. "The Guru atonce acceded to his request and remarked, "You have saved the root of Sikhism in the Majha. You and your companions, all forty of you are Muktas or the saved-ones, delivered from the round of births and deaths for ever." Then the Guru went to the place where Bhag Kaur was lying sense-

1. Kartar Singh: Life of Guru Gobind Singh, p. 222.

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less. She had not been severely wounded but had fallen down out of utter exhaustion. A little aid revived her. She told the master what had occurred after he had left the party. He, in turn, told her of the last saving deed of Bhai Mahan Singh.

The Guru was greatly pleased with Mai Bhag Kaur for what she had done. He got her removed from the battlefield and got her wounds treated and healed.

After her recovery, Bhag Kaur chose to stay with the Guru. She led the Sikh way of life in its totality.

She was considered to be the *Braham Giani.* Bhai Santokh Singh in Suraj Parkash says that she having reached the stage of Braham Giani did not care for dress and used to remain nude. This view of Bhai Santokh Singh is a fallacy, cut and dried. Braham Giani, according to Guru Granth Sahib, is a person who remains pure in the midst of impurities and serves the people without any desire of reward for that. He is above petty considerations of caste, creed, clime and country. He, in no case, pays scant regard for the decencies of life. As a matter of fact, Bhag Kaur combined in herself virtues both of a saint and a warrior. She was strong in character, firm in faith and unflinching in her determination. In view of these qualities, the Guru allowed her inclusion in the bodyguard of ten Sikhs, meant to guard the bed room. She used to be dressed in male attire. She remained with the Guru at Talwandi Saboki. She was one of these privileged Sikhs who accompanied the Guru in his journey to Khultanpur, where Aurangzeb was sojourning. She was there in the camp of the Guru when he marched along with Bahadur Shah first to Rajasthan and then to the Deccan. She observed for herself the parleys that took place between the Guru and Bahadur Shah and noticed with interest how Banda was converted to Sikhism.

After the death of Guru Gobind Singh at Nander, Bhag Kaur went to Bidar and continued to stay there till the last breath of her life. As long as she lived, she served the cause of the Guru. Her example was that of a person embodying in herself all the virtues of a good Sikh as also of the ideal Sikh woman alive to her duties as much as to her rights, believing in perfect equality among sexes and discarding the oft-held view that woman was primarily an appanage of a man. Her performance, both in the battlefield and the sphere of proselytization spoke high of the regenerating process that Sikhism, since its

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inception, had set in motion. Her achievements were enduring, her charactar and conduct were flawless, her leadership was unquestioned, her faith was unflinching and her demeanour was striking. No wonder, she has been a perennial source of inspiration to the ladies to keep their head high and diginty aloft.

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Appendices

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II. Janam Sakhis as a souree of history.

III. Bhat Vahis as a source of the Sikh History.

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Appendix I

DATE OF BIRTH OF GURU NANAK

A lot of controversy is raging regarding the correct date of birth of Guru Nanak. While some scholars believe that the Guru was born on October 20, A.D. 1469 and some others hold that the Guru was born on April. 15 of the same year. The fact that the Sikhs celebrate the birth of Guru Nanak on Kartik Puranmasi has lent peculiar poignance to the controversy. This being so, it is incumbent on any one engaged in writing the history of the Gurus to express his views

Those scholars who aver that the Guru was born on October 20, 1469 (Kartik Puranmasi 1526 B.K.) give the following arguments:—

> The Bala Janam Sakhi gives the date as Kartik Puranmasi, 1526, the full moon day of the month of Kattak or Kartik. Bhai Gurdas in his Kabit 345 points to Kartik Puranmasi as the correct date of birth. Bhai Gurdas says:—
>
> Kartik Māsi rut sarad puranmasī
> ath jani sāth gharī āj teri barī hai
>
> It is the month of Kartik, the season of coolness. Today, on this day of the full moon, this day of eight jams of sixty gharis, it is thy turn.

This, it is argued, refers to Nanak's turn to enter the world, and on the basis of this interpretation, it has been claimed that Bhai Gurdas here testifies to Kartik Puranmasī as the date of the Guru's birth.

Kesar Singh Chibbar's 'Bansavali Nama' and Gurparnali (1727) also point to Oct. 20, 1469 as the date of birth of Guru Nanak.

Bhai Santokh Singh of Amritsar wrote Suraj Parkash in 1823. He accepted Bhai Bala's version and put the Guru's date of birth in Kartik.

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Sewa Ram Singh and Khazan Singh in their respective books *Divine Master* and *History and Philosophy of the Sikhs* also affirm the date Oct. 20, 1469 as the correct date of birth.

A critical analysis of the sources quoted above in support of the view that the Guru was born on Oct. 20, 1469 would show that except Gurdas's Kabit 345, no other source can be called contemporary or near contemporary. Moreover these sources derive their information from Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala. Gian Singh in his book 'Panth Parkash' also says that the Guru was born in Kartik Puranmasī. Regarding this scholar who had the keen analytical mind, adherence to Kartik Puranmasi is understandable as he produced his significant work before 1885, the year in which both the Colebrooke and the Hafizabad Manuscripts were published.

Khazan Singh's view is also based on the information provided by Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala. According to McLeod "Khazan Singh who published his book 'History and Philosophy' of Sikhism in 1914, uses Karam Singh's method in reverse. Just as Karam Singh sought in his Kattak ke Vaisakh to establish the Vaisakh date by attacking the whole of the Bala Janam Sakhi tradition as totally unreliable in all respects, so Khazan Singh denied it by affirming the reliability of the 'Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala, and repudiating those of the Puratan Janam Sakhi.

As it is clear from above Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala is the common source of information for all the authorities quoted above, so the whole evidence in support of October 20, 1469 as the date of birth boils down to Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala and the 345th Kabit of Bhai Gurdas.

So far as the Kabit of Bhai Gurdas is concerned, it does not indicate any thing. McLeod comments, "It is true that this couplet may be interpreted as a reference to a particular person's birth but it is also true that it may be interpreted as a conventional reference to the month of Kartik in the style of the 'barah mah', the Twelve Month or calendar poem. The balance of possibility must be held to favour the latter. In the first place there is no reference to Guru Nanak. Secondly the form is a common one in Panjabi literature and it would have been an entirely natural one for Bhai Gurdas to have used. Thirdly as one would expect in this particular poetic form, the reference is to the present and not to a past event. The fact that the poem stands in isolation is not set in the context of a complete Barah Maha does not affect this conclusion. Farid's Asa 2, which also makes a conventional reference to Kartiks is not a part of *barah-maha*.

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Hari Ram Gupta gives another interpretation of the Gurdas's Kabit. According to him 'Kabit does not refer to Guru Nanak's mortal day but to the day of his spiritual regeneration. Dr. Trilochan Singh in his 'Guru Nanak' page 409 and some other scholars are wrong in attributing this Kabit to Guru Nanak's physical birthday. Bhai Gurdas could not say, "Guru Nanak was born on this day. It is your turn to be born today." 'Your turn' can refer to death, but not birth. It can certainly relate to spiritual birth.

Having proved that Kabit of Bhai Gurdas does not indicate Oct. 20, 1469 as the date of the birth of the Guru the only valuable source which supports this date is Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala or Bala tradition.

Should we accept this source as totally reliable as some scholars have erred. We do not regard it as totally reliable as also we do not consider it totally unreliable as Karam Singh would have us believe. We have focussed the attention of the students of history on the disparaging and the most unreliable stories contained in 'Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala'. This being so, before reaching some conclusion regarding the correct date of birth, we will have to analyse with the evidence of other contemporary or semi-contemporary sources. And when we do so, we understand that the evidence in favour of April 15, 1469 is more weighty and overwhelming. The evidence to support this date of birth is detailed as under:—

(i) Puratan Janam Sakhi states that Baba Nanak was born on Samvat 1526, month Baisakh on the third day of moonlit night, in the morning, three hours before dawn.

(ii) Sodhi Meharban's Janam Sakhi says that Nanak was born in the light half of Baisakh 1526 Samvat.

(iii) Similarly Vairowal Wali Janam Sakhi states that the birth of Guru Nanak took place in Samvat 1526, month Baisakh, third day of the moon three hours before dawn.

Another point that goes in favour of the Baisakh theory is the fact that for a very long time till the times of Bhai Mani Singh, the birthday of Guru Nanak was celebrated in Baisakh. The author of Mehma Parkash (prose) which was written in A.D. 1776 also testifies to the above view. According to Kartar Singh, the birth of Guru Nanak continued to be cele-

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brated in Baisakh up to A.D. 1809. Dr. Ganda Singh and Teja Singh have also adopted April 15, A.D. 1469 (Baisakh Sudi 3, 1526 B.K.) as the correct date of Guru Nanak's birthday.

There is another evidence which goes to prove that the birth of Guru Nanak took place in the month of Baisakh. Almost all the writers agree that the Guru died on Asauj Shudi 10 Samvat 1596 B.K. (September 22, 1539 A.D.)[1] and that he lived for seventy years, five months and seven days. If we count back this period from the date of birth, it inevitably points to April because the period upto Kartik is less than 70 years. From first Chet to Asauj Shudi 10, the period covers six months and twenty five days. Now calculate the exact date of birth by substracting the age of Nanak from the date of his death in this way :

Years	Months	Days
1596	6	25 (Date of death)
70	5	7
1526	1	18 (Date of birth)

By adding one month and 18 days to the commencement of the year, we get Baisakh Sudi third Samvat 1526.

A pertinent question in this connection is as to how the birth of Guru Nanak began to be celebrated on Kartik Puranmasi. The possible reasons are as under :—

During the Mughal period the Sikhs were subjected to relentless persecution with the result that they were driven from pillar to post. During this period of turmoil and tension, the Sikhs lost their old religious book. Only such books were left which happened to be with the Sikhs outside the Punjab. As the Bhai Bala Janam Sakhi was the only available text the Sikhs began to follow it.

And since it records Kartik Puranmasī as the date of birth, the people began to celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in the month of Kartik. To begin with, the birth anniversary of the Guru was celebrated at some place in the month of Baisakh and at some other place in the month of Kartik, and as time passed, it began to be celebrated in the

1. Asu Vadi 10, 1596 B.K. is the death date given by the original manuscript copy of Adi Granth held by the Sodhi family of Kartarpur.

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month of Kartik exclusively. Guru Nanak's birthday was celebrated at Nankana Sahib first of all, in 1868 A.D. on Kartik Puranmasī.

Macauliffe says that Giani Sant Singh lived at Amritsar in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was held in great esteem by the Sikhs. Near Amritsar was Ram Tirath, a holy place of the Hindus. There a big fair was held on Kartik Puranmasī. It was attended by lakhs of people both Hindus and Sikhs. Bhai Sant Singh did not like the Sikhs attending a Hindu fair. He made up his mind to establish an opposition fair in Amritsar on the same date thus preventing the Sikhs from making pilgrimage to Ram Tirath of Hindus. He wanted them to attend the Sikh fair at Golden Temple. Consequently he adopted the Kartik date.[1]

In this connection Dr. Ganda Singh's remarks are pertinent and seem to be near the truth. Mecauliffe's version does not seem to be very reliable because such a big decision can not be owned by the community at the instance of one man who was certainly not even acknowledged leader of the community. His decision at best could influence the Sikhs of Lahore only; but even this is a conjecture of ours.

Even Dr. Ganda Singh's views are a probability but this probability seems to be very close to possibility. He says:

> "It is not improbable that some time after the creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh on the first of Baisakh 1756 B.K. the celebrations of Guru Nanak's birthday at Nankana Sahib clashed with the celebration of the birth of the Khalsa at Anandpur. With no convenient means of transport, it was perhaps feared that the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday which, at times, according to Lunar reckoning fell within a few days of Baisakh with the passage of time came to be neglected. It was perhaps found expedient to shift it to the beginning of winter. Moreover, it suited to the conscience of the agricultural classes who formed the bulk of the Sikh community and had to look to the harvesting of their wheat crop beginning immediately after the Baisakhi festival."

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1. Macauliffe : Sikh Religion vol. I, lxxxv.

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Appendix II

JANAM SAKHIS AS A SOURCE OF HISTORY

(1) JANAM SAKHI BHAI BALA

Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala is not a biography but a hagiography. Even hagiographies can be fruitful source of information, if they are free from distortions and legendry accretions. But unfortunately Bhai Bala Janam Sakhi suffers from all the aforesaid defects and consequently it has only limited historical value. According to W. H. McLeod "the Bala version is, however, the least trustworthy of all the Janam Sakhi traditions. Bhai Karam Singh in his book entitled 'Kattak ke Baisakh' totally rejects the authenticity of this Janam Sakhi as well as of its author. He tries to prove that Bhai Bala was a fictitious person and his Janam Sakhi was bogus.

We do not subscribe to the view of Karam Singh. We hold that Bhai Bala was a genuine person, although he was not the author. So far as the historical value of Bala tradition is concerned, it was not altogether useless and had certainly some value—limited historical value.

That Bhai Bala was a genuine person is evident from the following historical facts :

(i) Mehma Prakash and Bhai Mani Singh's Janam Sakhi contain Bhat Bala's name at many places.

(ii) Bhai Bala's family still lives at Nankana Sahib.

(iii) Bhai Bala's tomb exists at Khadur.

(iv) Bhai Behlo's Suchak Parsang Guru ka written at the time of Adi Granth says:

> "Bala discarded his body there, at the holy city of Khadur, Angad, the Master performed the rites graciously with his own hands".[1]

1. Bale taga Kalevar tahan Puri Khadur Pavan mahan Bhali Marjada Angad nath, Bale ke Karam Kine hath.

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But he was not the author of the said Janam Sakhi. The story of his being its author gained currency because of its claim that it was dictated by Bhai Bala and written by Paira Mokha. Bhai Bala could not be the author because had he been so, he would not have mentioned the following disparaging stories about Guru Nanak:—

(i) In one story (Sakhi) called Sacha Sauda ki Guru Nanak is made to say:

> "In Dwapar Yuga, we worshipped God (Nirankar). We completed our devotion (Bhakti) then some low craving arose in our mind (Basna ham ko bayapi thi). This led to our birth in a low caste family of an oil-presser (Telhi).

(ii) In another story called Pharinde wali Sakhi, Pharinda asked Guru Nanak:

> "Have you forgotten those old days when we lived together in the house of Pran Nath Teli? Both you and I were real brothers. We had a sister also."

Nanak asked Pharinda what their names and place of residence were. Pharinda replied:

> "Our sister's name was Sundari. My name was Sundar. Your name was Parma. We lived in Sujanpur city. We then worshipped God so that we might take birth in a higher caste. You said that on account of your birth in a low caste, Brahmins and Kshatriyas did not respect you. You sang hymns. I played upon a musical instrument. Now you are Nanak, Sundari is Nanaki. I have regained my *rabab* (musical instrument)." (Dr. Gupta : History of the Sikh Gurus)

Many such stories can be reproduced. These stories implied that Guru Nanak was born again and again owing to the effect of his bad deeds in his previous lives. This is in contradiction to the Sikh ideas. The Sikhs believe that Guru Nanak was sent by God to liberate mankind from the shackles of birth, rebirth and sins. This being so, it is difficult to believe that Bhai Bala and Guru Angad would have spoken of Guru Nanak in such disrespectful terms. These facts go to prove that the Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala's author was not Bala.

Similarly the existence of Paira Mokha during the time of Guru Angad is not borne out by historical records. In Bhai Gurdas's eleventh Var, Paira Mokha has not been included among the names of the Sikhs of Guru Angad. In the same

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Var, however, three persons bearing the name Paira Mokha have been mentioned while Bhai Gurdas enumerate the prominent Sikhs of Guru Arjan Dev. They were (i) Paira of Chandal caste (ii) Paira Kohli (iii) Paira of Chhajal sub-caste who according to Bhai Santokh Singh was sent to Sangla Dip to bring Pran Sangali. Bhai Mani Singh in his book "Sikhan di Bhagat Mala" says that Bhai Paira of serial no. 2 was sent to Sangla Deep and he brought Pran Sangali. From this, it can be surmised that Paira of serial no. 2 and Paira of serial no. 3 were the same and Paira belonged to Kohli sub-caste. Closely connected with it is the question: how 'Mokha' as suffix began to be used. The etymology of this can be traced to the words which Guru Arjan Dev spoke when Paira Mokha brought Pran Sangli to him. Those words as recorded by Bhai Mani Singh are as under:—

ਭਾਈ ਪੈੜਾ । ਤੂੰ ਮੋਖ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈਂ, ਤੈਨੂੰ ਅਨਿੰਨ ਭਗਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ।.....ਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਪੈੜਾ ਮੋਖ ਹੋਇਆ ।[1]

(Brother Paira ! You have attained liberation. You have reaped the fruit of Bhagti. Now you are a liberated being.") As the Guru used the word (liberated) to mark his spiritual elevation, the people began to call him 'Mokh' and then 'Mokha'. In view of all this, the possibility of Paira Mokha to be the writer of the above referred Janam Sakhi is ruled out.

But the question who was the real author of Bala Janam Sakhi still remains un-answered. Two theories have been advanced. One is that the original Janam Sakhi was composed by the heretical sect of Hindals during the first half of the seventeenth century; and the other is that a Janam Sakhi of unknown but early origin was interpolated by the Hindalis.

There can be no doubt that the Bala Janam Sakhi as it has survived in manuscript form is a Hindali version of the life of Guru Nanak. This is not evident from the printed editions, for the publishers have purged almost all the references which expressed or seemed to imply Hindali enmity towards Guru Nanak but the manuscript versions have whole Sakhis and a number of briefer references which were clearly intended to exalt Baba Hindal and to deginrate Guru Nanak at the expense of Kabir. Were these derogatory references an integral part of a Hindali Janam Sakhi deliberately composed as a contribution to the sect's campaign against the orthodox Sikhs or should they be regarded as interpolation? Of the alternatives

---

1. Sikhan di Bhagat Mala : ed. by Bhai Vir Singh, para 113, p. 141.

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the former appears to be the more likely. Our reasons are as under :—

In this Janam Sakhi, Mardana is told about Hindals, in the following meaningful words :

"He (Handal) will be our devotee.....take birth in Jat family..... will be more spiritually advanced as compared with him (Nanak), but he will not compose hymns. He will be an entity in himself; his followers will not have faith in anyone except God. People will start following him and without his express willingness or speech, his sect will flourish."

From these words it is clear that the main objective of the composition of Bala Janam Sakhi was to exalt the position of Handal through Guru Nanak as also to denigrate the personality of Guru Nanak.

We find affirmation of this in another fact incorporated in Bala Janam Sakhi. Guru Nanak has been presented as the servant of Raja Janak while Handal as the son-in-law of him. According to Ratan Singh Bhangu, Handal was the devotee of Sakhi Sarwar. Tired of hunger he came to the kitchen of Guru Arjan Dev and was so much impressed by the Guru that he thought it advisable to dedicate his life to the Guru's cause. The Guru was so deeply moved at the dedicated service he put in different capacities that he appointed him as the preacher of Jandiala. With the passage of time, Handal prompted by egocentricity began to establish his independent gaddi or gurudom. Handal was born in 1573 A.D. (1630 B.K.) at Jandiala in district Amritsar. He expired in A.D. 1648 on having spent seventy-five years in this mortal world.

After his death, Bidhi Chand assumed the charge of the work of his father. Soon he married a Muslim woman and evidently responded to the reproaches of the Sikhs by turning apostate. Bidhi Chand was otherwise very intelligent and a great scholar. He harnessed his intellect to induct many more facts into the already prepared Bala Janam Sakhi (or Hindal Janam Sakhi) which were purposely fabricated to tarnish the sacred image of Guru Nanak to convince the people that Hindal was superior to Guru Nanak. Hence the inference is clear that Bala Janam Sakhi was written by Handalis with the express motive of exalting Baba Handal possibly to

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strengthen their heretical sect. The probable date of its composition is A.D. 1640 (1697 B.K.).[1]

As the motif behind the composition of Bala Janam Sakhi was sectarian and particularised, it is clear that its historical value in respect of Guru Nanak's life is not much. Its historical value suffers dimunition still more when we find this work containing substantial number of the miracle stories, exaggerated accounts, legendry details and distortion of facts to suit a particular purpose. It is a crude mixture of history, heaven of Hindal legends and hell of haterers of Nanak.

In spite of all these drawbacks, Bala Janam Sakhi will have to be consulted while preparing a biographical account of Guru Nanak. It is the first written available account on Guru Nanak; it furnishes information, of course in a rough manner, regarding the places visited by Guru Nanak; it records the reactions of the people to Guru Nanak's tenets, it provides rich material to the student of cultural history of the area and lastly it is a milestone in the evolution of the Panjabi prose.

(2) MEHARBAN'S JANAM SAKHI

This Janam Sakhi comprises six portions. The first three are entitled Pothi Sach Khand, Pothi Harji and Pothi Chaturbhuj respectively, while the later three bear the titles such as Keso Rai Pothi, Abhai Pad Pothi and finally Prem Pad Pothi.[2] The script is Gurumukhi, but the language is basically Braj with an admixture of words drawn from eastern and western Panjabi, Persian and Multani. Pothi Sach Khand, the first volume of the Janam Sakhi is directly attributed to Meharban himself and it is only one which contains appreciable amount of biographical material. The second and third volumes contain little other than discourse and interpretation of scripture, and it is quite safe to presume that the same must apply to almost all that was contained in the remaining three volumes which have never been found.

Some of the Sikh scholars are averse to assign any reliability to this Janam Sakhi on the ground that Meharban, along with his father Prithi Mal were the authors of the schismatic move among the Sikhs. Prithi Mal posed as the fifth Guru, but when Guru Arjan died a martyr, it became

1. Macauliffe : Sikh Religion, vol. I, p. 82.

2. The complete manuscript of the Janam Sakhi is not available. In Khalsa College Library, the two copies which are available, the later three parts are missing.

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impossible for him to pose as his rival. So he announced himself as the sixth Guru, while Meharban's son Harji became the eighth Guru. After that their guruship faded away. In the name of Nanak vi, vii and viii they composed hymns, plagiarizing and changing the verses of nirgun upasana to sargun upasana in praise of Krishna and Rama. They stole so much of it and imitated so much of the Bani of earlier Guru that Guru Arjan had to compile a correct version.

Bhai Mani Singh tells us that Guru Arjan felt that the original Janam Sakhi had developed many patterns and it was necessary to standardize it. Time did not permit him to do so but he asked Bhai Gurdas to compose a var contradicting the false representation of historical and mystical facts of Nanak. Bhai Gurdas and also Guru Arjan contradicted the theory that Nanak was Avtara of Janak. He refuted their versions of Nanak's visit to Macca, Baghdad and Sumer.

In view of all this, impression went round that Minas' version about the Gurus should not be taken seriously—rather discarded summarily. Hence the value of Meharban Janam Sakhi was not judged properly.

"An examination of it indicates that Meharban has been largely misjudged. It is true that certain features of Janam Sakhi could give offence,[1] but such features are by no means as conspicuous as the Janam Sakhi reputation would suggest. The tone, far from being one of denigration, is manifestly one of enthusiastic homage and places this Janam Sakhi firmly within the same hagiographic category as the other Janam Sakhis. This is indeed what might have been anticipated. The Minas were schismatic, not heretics, and although they certainly bore enmity towards Guru Arjan and his successor there was no evident reason why they should have sought to malign Guru Nanak."

All said and done, this Janam Sakhi is quite useful to a student of history on account of the following:—

(i) In the first place Meharban offers a more satisfactory chronology and a more likely travel itinerary and the Puratan Janam Sakhis. According to Meharban's Pothi Sach Khand,

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1. According to Pothi Sach Khand, Guru Nanak was a re-incarnation of Raja Janak and Guru Nanak originally began his travels with the intention of finding a Guru. Moreover, Guru Nanak following the conclusion of his travels.

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Guru Nanak made two major journeys. During the first journey, he travelled eastwards as far as Jagannath Puri, southwards to Rameswaram and Ceylon, and then back to the Panjab up the west coast, calling at Ujjain and Bikaner on the way. The second took him northwards into the Himalayas, westwards to Mecca and then back through Sindh. According to Dr. McLeod, "This is much more likely than the traditional pattern of the Puratan accounts which follows the four cardinal points of the compass. It is not at all likely that Guru Nanak would have returned home after an eastern journey and then gone to the south, and nor does it seem possible that he would have had sufficient time for such extensive travels. Meharban's description of a single all-embracing visit to the holy places of India is inherently more probable and offers a more reasonable time schedule. Moreover, Meharban is supported by the brief outline which Bhai Gurdas gives."[1]

(ii) Miracle stories in Meharban Janam Sakhi are less grotesque. There is no mention of Baha-ud-Din's magic-mat, no account of Mardana being turned into a lamb, killing and stewing his son at Guru Nanak's command. It does not mean that this Janam Sakhi is devoid of fantasy; in fact, its miracles are of a more subdued nature.

(iii) Meharban, for all his schismatic connections was a grandson of Guru Ram Das and nephew of Guru Arjan Dev whose affection he had enjoyed in his boyhood. The relationship would probably have meant access to relatively reliable traditions which might have been denied to whoever gathered the Puratan material.

All the same, the students of history will have to use his discriminating sense to arrive at conclusion or separate history from mythology and fiction. The task is difficult as in the words of Bhai Mani Singh, Meharban's Janam Sakhi is milk diluted with a lot of water—and obviously it is difficult to separate milk from water.

(3) BHAI MANI SINGH'S JANAM SAKHI

The Gyan Ratnavli, which is popularly known as the Bhai Mani Singh's Janam Sakhi is the latest of the more important collections of Sikhs. Its authorship is attributed to Bhai Mani Singh, a famous Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh's times. The circumstances which are said to have led him to write his

1. McLeod: Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 32.

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Janam Sakhi are set out in a prologue. It is said in this that some Sikhs once approached Bhai Mani Singh with the request that he should prepare an authentic account of Guru Nanak's life. This, they assured him, was essential as the Minas had maliciously interpolated objectionable things in the current account with the result that the Sikhs' faith in the Guru was declining. Bhai Mani Singh asked them to refer to Bhai Gur Das's first Var but this, they maintained, was too brief. Finally, Bhai ji agreed to make the attempt.

Regarding the material incorporated in Gyan Ratnavli Bhai ji says:

> "Just as swimmers fix reeds in the river so that those who do not know the way may also cross, so I shall take Bhai Gurdas's Var as my basis and in accordance with it, and with it, and with the accounts which I have heard at the court of the Master, I shall relate to you whatever commentary issues from my humble mind."[1]

From the above it is clear that Mani Singh took Var I as his basis and supplemented it with Sakhis he had heard at the court of Guru Gobind Singh. At the end of the Janam Sakhi, there is a epilogue in which it is stated that the completed work was duly signed by the Guru who commended it as a means of acquiring knowledge of Sikh faith.[2] McLeod with whom we agree, however, states that the first part of Gyan Ratnavli (minus the prologue and a few individual Sakhis) may possibly go back as far as the time of Guru Gobind Singh but so far as second half of Gyan Ratnavli is concerned, its language and its relationship to the Bala tradition suggest that this was probably done in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, although some individual Sakhis may have been added later.

The historical value of Gyan Ratnavli is immense. Various reasons can be attributed to this conclusion. Firstly, in no other Janam Sakhi it is easier to sift the matter interpolated and distorted than in this Janam Sakhi. Bhai Mani Singh follows the historical chronology of Bhai Gurdas's Var and the person who has distorted it introduces new material by destroying that order. Moreover, the style of Bhai Mani Singh is distinct and has a uniqueness of its own.

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1. McLeod : Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 25.
2. Gyan Ratnavli, Sakhi 225, p. 592.

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Any interpolation can be easily located by comparing its style with that of Bhai ji. Besides, Bhai Mani Singh never introduces Puranic stories either in his interpretation of Japji, Sidha Ghost etc. or in his Bhagat Mala and that is why the Puranic and Koranic stories introduced into it are visible to the discerning historian like patches of black cloth on a white coat. Secondly the first part of the Janam Sakhi is rather more satisfactory collection than those of Bala group. It has an order which is lacking in other Janam Sakhis particularly Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala. It avoids many of their errors, and it offers appreciably less than is plainly fantastic.

(4) PURATAN JANAM SAKHI

The term 'Puratan Janam Sakhi' designates no single known work, but rather a small group of Janam Sakhis which are clearly from a common source which has never been found. It is, however, generally used with reference to the composite work which was compiled by Bhai Vir Singh and first published in 1926.

Of the extant puratan Janam Sakhis, the two most important are Walayat wali Janam Sakhi, 'the Janam Sakhis from overseas' and the Hafizabad wali Janam Sakhi. The former was donated to the India Office Library in 1815 or 1818 and hence it is also known by this name. The well known German Scholar Trumpp discovered it there in A.D. 1872, and this is the reason that it is known as Wilayat wali Janam Sakhi. Its another copy discovered at Hafizabad in Pakistan is called Hafizabad wali Janam Sakhi. This copy was made in A.D. 1733. It is profusely illustrated. Panjab Government published its copies in A.D. 1885. In them, some of the pages are missing. Macauliffe, and Bhai Kahan Singh, the celebrated author of 'Mahan Kosh' attribute the authorship to Sewa Das, but there is no reference to such a person in the Janam-Sakhi. As a matter of fact, Macauliffe, in a comment, makes it clear that his information was not based upon anything he had himself seen.[1]

There were the two manuscripts which Bhai Vir Singh used for practically the whole of his composite Janam Sakhi. "For the most part, the two versions are very close, with only occasional words or phrases differing, but there are a few significant differences. Of the two, the Hafizabad manuscript

1. The late Sir Attar Singh , Chief of Bhadur gave the author this information. Sikh Religion Vol. I page ixxxvi, n. 1.

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appears to be closer to the common source although it is clear that it is not the original of the Puratan group. The original of the Puratan Janam Sakhi has never been found."[1]

This Janam Sakhi contains fifty-seven Sakhis. It was written in A.D. 1635 in the time of Guru Hargobind, nearly one hundred years after the death of Guru Nanak.[2]

After the Vars of Bhai Gurdas which were also written about this time, the Janam Sakhi till recently has been considered as the genuine source for Guru Nanak's biography. Macauliffe for his 'Sikh Religion' borrowed heavily from this 'Janam Sakhi' the expression 'Wah-e-Guru ji ki Fateh' adopted by Guru Gobind Singh occurs in this Janam Sakhi. But on a careful study of this Janam Sakhi, a student of history would have to submit that it was not totally reliable, although it furnishes a lot of material pertaining to the life of Guru Nanak. It quotes and puts into mouth of Guru Nanak the hymns of the third, fourth and fifth Gurus, which looks strange and illogical. Moreover, it gives a few stories and leaves out many. It leaves out such stories as Sacha Sauda. It leaves also the stories in which Bhai Lalo is mentioned.

(5) BHAI GURDAS VAR I

Bhai Gurdas (1551-1639) was a nephew of the third Guru, and the first cousin of Bibi Bhani, daughter of Guru Amar Das and wife of the fourth Guru, Ram Das. He composed thirty nine vars or ballads and 556 kabits or couplets. In Var No. I, stanzas 23-45, and Var II stanzas 13-14, he gives a short account of Guru Nanak. Stanzas 13-14 of Var II are of comparatively slight importance.

No doubt the account of Guru Nanak's life given in Vars is brief, but within the limited range which it covers this account has generally been accepted as the most reliable. The reasons are not far to seek. Firstly Bhai Gurdas had close association with the Gurus and more prominent of his Sikh contemporaries. These would include not only Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind but also older disciples whose memories might have extended back to the time of Guru Nanak himself. Secondly

1. McLeod: Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 17.
2. A reference in the Colebrooke manuscript clearly points to A D. 1635 as the date of the original composition.

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the account is coherent so far the itinerary is concerned. Thirdly there is less of miraculous in this account and accordingly less which warrants a measure of scepticism. In view of all this, Sardar Khushwant Singh expresses a generally accepted conclusion when he says of the events of Guru Nanak's life "Whatever reference he makes in the vars must be considered authentic".

We, however, suggest that we should not repose unqualified trust in the vars, although we must attach greater degree of trust to the two vars than to those of Puratan and Meharban Janam Sakhis. We obviously cannot accept the 'Yogies' at Achal Batala turning into lions, wolves, birds and snakes. Equally unacceptable is the anachronistic reference to Gorakh Nath and also the story of the Jewels by the lake side.

(6) MAHIMA PRAKASH

Two more works bearing the same name but written by different persons deserve the place of Janam Sakhis. They are Mahima Prakash Vartik and Mahima Prakash Kavita. The former work was written in A.D. 1741 by Bawa Kirpal Singh Bhalla, and the later, the Mahima Prakash Kavita, in A.D. 1776 by Sarup Das Bhalla, a descendant of Guru Amar Das. The two accounts are basically the same, but the prose version having twenty Sakhis, devoted to Guru Nanak is appreciably shorter as compared with the metrical version which contains sixty five Sakhis pertaining to Guru Nanak. Sarup Das's account is based on Puratan Janam Sakhis. He began writing this work at Varanasi and completed it at Amritsar. Both these works not only deal with Guru Nanak's life but also of other Gurus.

The two versions are too recent to be regarded primary source for the life of Guru Nanak. However, they occupy position of importance in the history of Sikh tradition, for they were composed during a period, which, although generally obscure, was certainly significant in terms of the development of such tradition.

General Remarks about Janam Sakhis

(i) No Janam Sakhi is contemporary. All of them were written long after Guru Nanak. Janam Sakhi Bhai Bala, Puratan Janam Sakhi and Meharban's Janam Sakhi were written not before the first half of the seventeenth century. Two versions of Mahima Prakash came into existence in the eighteenth century.

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(ii) They are mixture of supernatural elements, facts myth and legend. It is very difficult to divest the incidents and events described in these Janam Sakhis of their supernatural settings.

(iii) They were written by persons of faith and for the faithful, not for historians.

(iv) The chronology has not been given the regard due to it with the result that it becomes very difficult to arrange different events of Guru Nanak's life in chronological sequence.

(v) These are very rich mines of information regarding the degree of faith of the people in Nanak and in Sikhism. They also throw sufficient light on the different customs and beliefs of the people of the age in which they were written.

(vi) According to Dr. McLeod, "The Janam Sakhis must be regarded as examples of hagiography and any inclination to treat them as biographies will distort both our understanding of Guru Nanak and our appreciation of the true value of Janam Sakhis themselves".

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Appendix III

BHAT VAHIS AS A SOURCE OF THE SIKH HISTORY

Bhats belonged to the Sarsut branch of Brahmins who regarded themselves to be the descendants of Kaushash Rishi. As per tradition, they resided on the bank of the River Saraswati which before its disappearance used to flow in the vicinity of Kurukshetra. Those of the Brahmins who lived in trans-Saraswati region came to be called Gaur as against the residents of the cis-Saraswati area, who acquired the appellation of Sarsuti. As the latter took to the bardic profession, they came to have a lower rank among the Brahmin community.

The most important of the ancestral places of the Bhat families extant even now, are Karsindhu and Talauda (both in Jind District) and Sultanpur Bhadson near Ladwa. Some of the families chose to settle down in U.P. and Madhya Pradesh while some others resided in the neighbourhood of Jagadhari and Saharanpur. All these families have in their possession records of great historical value, called Bhat Vahis containing detailed genealogical lists of their clientele.

From the Bhat Vahi of Bhai Sant Singh, Bhat of Kar-Sindhu, we obtain information about the family tree of many of the Bhats who came in contact with the Sikh Gurus. This tree starts with Bhagirath whose ninth descendant was Bhat Rayya who lived at Sultanpur (near Ladwa). He had six sons namely Bhikha, Sekha, Tokha, Gokha, Chokha and Tada. Of those Bhats whose compositions are found in Adi Granth, Mathura, Jalap and Kirat were sons of Bhikha, Salh and Bhald were sons of Bhikha's younger brother Sekha, Balh was son of Tokha, Harbans was son of Gokha whereas Kalsahar and Gayand were sons of Chokha. Bhikha, the eldest son of Bhat Rayya, has been mentioned by Bhai Gurdas among the devoted Sikhs of Guru Amar Das. This shows that the family fell under the spell of Sikhism as early as the period of Guru Amar Das. Once the start was made, the devotion of the Bhats to the Sikh Gurus increased rapidly. In the time of Guru Arjan Dev, a large group of them composed panegyries in admiration of the

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various Gurus. The fact impressed Guru Arjan Dev so much that he decided to incorporate them in Adi Granth under preparation then.

The Bhats not only composed poems or recorded different events pertaining to the Gurus, but also they were active participants in various other activities. They took part in the wars of Guru Hargobind. After the sixth Guru, they attached themselves in turn to the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Gurus.

Thus it is legitimate to assume that the Bhats were closely attached to the Sikh Gurus and had keen interest in the Sikh movement even after them. This being so, Bhat Vahis are a reliable source regarding the history of the Panjab in general and Sikh Gurus and Sikh Movement in particular. A brief account of the information furnished by them is as under :

(i) We get a lot of information regarding the personality of the Gurus, particularly of Guru Arjan Dev.

(ii) Bhat Vahis have rendered a lot of service to history by recording the chronology of the wars of Guru Hargobind. Before the discovery of this source, the dates of these battles known to us were incorrect.

According to Bhat Vahis, the first battle which was a small affair was fought in B.K. 1678 (A.D. 1621) at the village Rohila (Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi). The trouble arose out of a local Khatri Gherar landlord, Bhagwana, offering resistance to the Guru's plan of founding the new city of Sri Hargobindpur. The Guru got victory. On the Guru's side, among the killed were Mathura Bhat, son of Baba Bhikha. The second battle was fought at Amritsar in B.K. 1691 (A.D. 1634) in the time of Shah Jahan. In this battle Kirat Bhat and Balu Bhat were killed (Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi). The third battle which was fought at Marhaj took place on 17th Poh B.K. 1691. The next battle was fought at Kartarpur on the 29th and 30th Baisakh, 1692 B.K. (A.D. 1635). In this battle too, some Bhats were killed. The last battle was fought at Phagwara on Ist of Jeth B.K. 1692 (A.D. 1635) (Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi) in which Bhaees Desa and Sohela, sons of Balu Bhat, grandsons of Mulu Bhat fell martyrs.

Similarly much light is thrown by this source on Guru Har Rai and Guru Har Krishan. Bhai Sewa Singh's Shahid Bilas which is based on the Bhat Vahis of the author of Sewa Singh's

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own family furnishes a lot of information regarding the Gurus, as also regarding Bhai Mani Singh which is the main theme of this book.

So far as Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh is concerned, Bhat Vahis are a rich mine of useful information. It is from these that we get concrete information that Guru Tegh Bahadur was not a recluse—rather active participant in the Sikh Movement. He used to go out of Bakala to preach Sikhism. He undertook religious tours of the Eastern provinces of the country three years before he was given the guruship. The exact date and the method of founding Chak Nanki is also furnished by Bhat Vahis. Bhat Vahis have very useful entries regarding Guru Tegh Bahadur's nomination to Guru Har Krishan, peformance of succession ceremony by Dargah Mal and the sangat from Delhi and Makhan Shah's visit to Baba Bakala and his offerings of 101 Mohars. In fact, many of the points which hitherto were not clear have been made clear by the Bhat Vahis.

It is from them that we get the definite information regarding the arrest of Guru Tegh Bahadur at Dhamtan and then at Malikpur Rangharan. The facts that Guru Tegh Bahadur was kept as a prisoner at Sirhind for about four months and for eight days at Delhi are furnished by Bhat Vahis. The exact name of the persons to pick up the sacred head of Guru Tegh Bahadur is also found in the Bhat Vahis.

Regarding Guru Gobind Singh too, we can glean a lot of information from Bhat Vahis. The entries therein show as to how Guru Gobind Singh received the sacred head of his father at Kiratpur, how he behaved in the battles of Anandpur and how the people particularly the privileged classes reacted to the Khalsa.

Even after Guru Gobind Singh, Bhats continued to evince deep interest in the activities of the Sikhs. Bhai Seva Ram's Shahid Bilas which is in fact the aggregate of the information gleaned from the Bhat Vahis of his family throws enough of light on the life and achievements of the Sikhs in the later Mughal period. If the students of history today have been able to restructure the correct image of Bhai Mani Singh and appraise his achievement properly, it is because of the information contained in the Bhat Vahis.

Important extracts from Bhat Vahis are detailed hereunder to bring into focus their importance.

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Guru Har Krishan Dev, Eighth Master, son of Guru Har Rai of Suraj Bansis of Gosal Got, Sodhi Khatris, on Wednesday, Chet Sudi 14, Sammat 1721 BK. (30 March, 1664) called for five pice and one coconut and having got them raised his right arm thrice and in a low voice said, "My Baba Tegh Bahadur of Bakala may be recognised as Guru after me. He who does so will be blessed by the Guru. The rest is known to the Guru only."

(Bhat Vahi Talauda)

Punjabi Version

ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਅਠਵਾਂ ਬੇਟਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ ਜੀ ਕਾ। ਸੂਰਜ ਬੰਸੀ ਗੋਸਲ ਗੋਤ੍ਰ ਸੋਢੀ ਖਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਾਲ 1721 ਚੇਤ ਮਾਸੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਚੌਦਾਂ ਬੁਧਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਿੰਹੁ ਪੰਜ ਪੈਸੇ ਨਲੀਏਰ ਮੰਗਾਏ, ਤਿੰਨ ਵਾਰ ਦਾਈਂ ਭੁਜਾ ਭਵਾਈਂ। ਧੀਮੀ ਆਵਾਜ ਸੇ ਬਚਨ ਕੀਆ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਬਾਬਾ ਤੇਗ਼ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਬਕਾਲੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੋ ਅਸਾਂ ਕੇ ਪੀਛੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਾਨਨਾ। ਜੋ ਜਾਨੇਗਾ, ਗੁਰੂ ਤਿਣਕੀ ਬਾਹੁੜੀ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਆਗੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਾਣੇ।

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Dewan Durgah Mal son of Dwarka Das Chhibbar, Mata Bassi wife of Baba Gurditta, Mata Sulakhni wife of Guru Har Rai, Chowpat Rai son of Pera Chhibbar, Jehta son of Bhai Mai Das, Mani Ram son of Mai Das, Jagtu son of Padam Rai Hajawat, Gurbakhsh son of Bagha Chheepe came to Bakala from Delhi on Amavas of Bhadson 1721 BK. Mata Bassi bowed and placed five Paisa and coconut before the Guru. Baba Gurditta son of Bhai Buddha performed the Tikka ceremony of Guruship for Guru Tegh Bahadur, ninth Master, with the permission of Dwarka Das son of Anjani Sahib.

(Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi)

Punjabi Version

ਦੀਵਾਨ ਦਰਗਹ ਮੱਲ ਆਇਆ ਬੇਟਾ ਦਵਾਰਕਾ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ, ਮਾਤਾ ਬਸੀ (ਨੇਤੀ) ਜੀ ਆਈ, ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰਦਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਕੀ, ਮਾਤਾ ਸੁਲੱਖਣੀ ਜੀ ਆਈ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ ਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਸਤਮੇ ਕੀ, ਚਉਪਤਿ ਰਾਇ ਆਇਆ ਬੇਟਾ ਮਾਈ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ, ਜਗਤੂ ਆਇਆ ਬੇਟਾ ਪਦਮ ਰਾਇ ਹਜਾਲਤ ਕਾ, ਗੁਰਬਖ਼ਸ਼ ਆਇਆ ਬੇਟਾ ਬਾਘੇ ਛੀਪੇ ਕਾ, ਨਾਨੂੰ ਆਇਆ ਬੇਟਾ ਬਾਘੇ ਛੀਪੇ ਕਾ। ਦਿੱਲੀ ਸੇ ਬਕਾਲਾ ਨਗਰੀ ਆਏ। ਸਾਲ ਸਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਇਕੀਸ ਮਾਹ ਭਾਦਵ ਕੀ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਸ਼ੁਕਰਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁੰ। ਮਾਤਾ ਬਸੀ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਪਾਂਚ ਪੈਸੇ ਨਰੀਏਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਆਗੇ ਰਖ ਮੱਥਾ ਟੇਕਾ। ਦਵਾਰਕਾ ਕਾ ਬੇਟਾ ਅਨਜਨੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਸੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਬੁੱਢੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤਾ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਿਆਈ ਕਾ ਟਿੱਕਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਮਸਤਕ ਮੇਂ ਲਾਇਆ।

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Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru son of Guru Hargobind of Kiratpur founded a new settlement on the maund of Makhowal under the shadow of Naina Devi. Bhai Gurditta the son of Bhai Budha performed the foundation ceremony and the new settlement was named Chak Nanki on Parvishthe Ikkis Monday Smvt 1722.

(Bhat Vahi Talauda, Pargana Jind)

Punjabi Version

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਨਾਵਾਂ, ਬੇਟਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਵਾਸੀ ਕੀਰ ਪੁਰ ਰਾਜ ਕਹਿਲੂਰ ਸਾਲ ਸਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਬਾਈਸ ਅਸਾਢ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਸ਼ਠੇ ਇਕੀਸ ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁੰ ਨੈਣਾ ਦੇਵੀ ਕੇ ਨੀਚੇ ਮਾਖੋਵਾਲ ਗਾਮ ਕੇ ਥੇਹ ਤੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਬੰਸ਼ ਕੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤਾ ਜੀ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਹਾਥ ਸੇ, ਨਏ ਗਾਮ ਦੀ ਮੱਝੀ ਗਾਡੀ। ਨਾਉਂ 'ਚੱਕ ਨਾਨਕੀ' ਰਾਖਾ। ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਕੜਾਹੀ ਕੀ।

Guru Tegh Bahadur, Ninth Guru, was at Dhamdhan, Bangar when Alam Khan Rohilla appeared under royal orders (for the Guru's arrest). It was on Katik Sudi 11, Sukla Pakh, 1722 BK. (8 November, 1665). With him arrested were Sati Das, Mati Das, sons of Hira Mal Chhibbar, Gawal Das son of Chhote Mal Chhibbar, Gurdas son of Kirat Barhtia, Sangat son of Binna Uppal, Jetha and Dayal Das sons of Mai Das Jalhana Balaunt and other Sikh fakirs.

(Bhat Vahi Jado Bansian ki)

Punjabi Version

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਨਾਂਵੇਂ ਕੋ ਨਗਰ ਧਮਧਾਨ ਪਰਗਣਾ ਬਾਂਗਰ ਸੇ ਆਲਮ ਖਾਨ "ਰੁਹੇਲਾ" ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਗੈਲ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਕੋ ਲੈ ਕਰ ਆਇਆ, ਸਾਲ ਸਤ੍ਰਹ ਸੈ ਬਾਈਸ ਕਾਤਕ ਸੁਦੀ ਗਿਆਰਸ ਕੋ, ਬੁਧਵਾਰ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁੰ, ਸਾਥ ਮਤੀਦਾਸ ਸਤੀਦਾਸ ਬੇਟੇ ਹੀਰਾ ਮੱਲ ਛਿਬਰ ਕੇ, ਗੁਆਲ ਦਾਸ ਬੇਟਾ ਛੁਟੇ ਮੱਲ ਛਿਬਰ ਕਾ, ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਬੇਟਾ ਕੀਰਤ ਬੜਤੀਏ ਕਾ, ਸੰਗਤ ਬੇਟਾ ਬਿੰਨੇ ਉਪਲ ਕਾ, ਜੇਠਾ, ਦਿਆਲ ਦਾਸ ਬੇਟੇ ਮਾਈ ਦਾਸ ਕੇ ਜਲਹਾਨੇ ਬਲਉਂਤ, ਹੋਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਫਕੀਰ ਆਏ।

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Guru Tegh Bahadur the Ninth Guru remained under the custody of Kanwar Ram Singh Kachhwaha son of Raja Jai Singh Mirza. He was kept a detenue for 2 months three days and was released on the Ist of Poh Krishna Pakh BK. 1722 after which he went to the house of Pushpa Dai which he left after three days.

(Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni)

Punjabi Version

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਨਾਵਾਂ.....ਬੇਟਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਸੰਮਤ ਸਤ੍ਰਾ ਸੈ ਬਾਈਸ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਣਾ ਪਖ ਮਾਸ ਕੀ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਦਿੰਹੁ ਦੇ ਮਾਸ ਤੀਨ ਦਿਵਸ ਨਜ਼ਰਬੰਦੀ ਸੇ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੋਕਰ ਰਸੀਨਾ ਨਗਰੀ ਰਾਣੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਪਾ ਦੇਈ ਕੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਮੇਂ ਆਏ। ਤੀਨ ਦਿਹੁੰ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਪਟਨਾ ਨਗਰੀ ਜਾਨੇ ਕੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕਰੀ।

Guru Tegh Bahadur, Ninth Master, after taking leave of the ruler of Assam Raja Suraj Dev (Surj Dev) was the title of Ahom Kings) and the ruler of Amber, Raja Ram Singh arrived in Delhi and halted at Bhai Kalyana's Dharamsala. With him were Diwan Durgah Mal Chhibbar and Nawab Saif Khan. It was on Asar 22, 1727 BK. (22 June 1670). He stayed at Delhi for two months and thirteen days. After release from Imperial confinement and taking leave of Mata Pushpa Devi, Guru ji proceeded to Madar Desh (Punjab).

Punjabi Version

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਸਾਮ ਪਤੀ ਰਾਜਾ ਸੁੱਗਦੇਵ, ਅੰਬੇਰਪਤਿ ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੇ ਬਿਦਾਇਗੀ ਲਈ, ਦਿੱਲੀ ਭਾਈ ਕਲਿਆਣੇ ਕੀ ਧਰਮਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਮੇਂ ਆਇ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਕੀਆ। ਗੈਲ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਦਰਗਹ ਮੱਲ ਛਿੱਬਰ, ਨਵਾਬ ਸੈਫ ਖ਼ਾਨ ਆਏ, ਸਾਲ ਸਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਸਤਾਈਸ ਅਸਾੜ੍ਹ ਮਾਸ ਕੀ ਬਾਈਸ ਕੋ, ਦੋ ਮਾਸ ਤੇਰਾਂ ਦਿਹੁੰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਮੇਂ ਬਿਰਾਜੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਨਜ਼ਰਬੰਦੀ ਸੇ ਮੁਕਤ ਹੂਏ। ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਪੁਸ਼ਪਾ ਦੇਈ ਸੇ ਵਿਦਾਇਗੀ ਲਈ, ਮਦ੍ ਦੇਸ ਆਏ।

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Kirpa Ram son of Arhu Ram grandson of Narain Das, great grandson of Braham Das, descendants of Thakur Das, of Bhardwaj got, Sarsut Datt Brahmin, resident of Mattan, Pargana Srinagar (Kashmir) led a band of 16 principal Brahmins to Chak Nanaki, pargana Kahlur on Jeth Sudi 11, 1732 BK.

(Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi)

Punjabi Version

ਭਾਈ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਰਾਮ ਬੇਟਾ ਅੜੂ ਰਾਮ ਕਾ ਪੋਤਾ ਨਥੈਣ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ, ਪੜਪੋਤਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਦਾਸ ਕਾ ਬੰਸ ਠਾਕਰ ਦਾਸ ਕੀ ਦੱਤ ਗੋਤ੍ਰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ, ਵਾਸੀ ਮਟਨ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ, ਸੰਮਤ ਸਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਬਤੀਸ ਜੇਠ ਮਾਸੇ ਸੁਦੀ ਇਕਾਦਸੀ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁੰ ਖੱਤ੍ਰਸ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੋਂ ਕੇ ਗੈਲ 'ਚੱਕ ਨਾਨਕੀ' ਪਰਗਣਾ ਕਹਲੂਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਮਹੱਲ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਕੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਆਇ ਫਰਿਆਦੀ ਹੂਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਨੈ ਧੀਰਜ ਦਈ। ਬਚਨ ਹੋਆ, 'ਤੁਸਾਂ ਕੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰੇਗਾ।'

Guru Tegh Bahadur, Ninth Guru was arrested by Mirza Nur Muhammad of the Police Station at Ropar on the 12th Parbishta of Sawan 1732 BK. (12 July, 1675) at Malik Pur Rangharan, pargana Ghanaula and taken to Sirhind. Also arrested and taken to Sirhind were Diwan Mati Das, Sati Das sons of Hira Mal Chhibbar, and Dayal Das son of Mai Das Balaut. The Guru remained confined in the prison of Bassi Pathana for four months and in Delhi Kotwali for eight days.

(Bhat Vahi Multani Sindhi)

Punjabi Version

ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ਼ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਜੀ ਮਹਲ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਕੋ, ਨੂਰ ਮੁਹੰਮਦ ਖ਼ਾਨ ਮਿਰਜ਼ਾ ਚੌਂਕੀ ਰੋਪੜ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ, ਸਾਲ ਸਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਬਤੀਸ, ਸਾਵਣ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਸ਼ਠੇ ਬਾਰਾਂ ਕੇ ਦਿਹੁੰ ਗਾਉਂ ਮਲਕਪੁਰ ਰੰਘੜਾਂ, ਪਰਗਣਾਂ ਘਨੌਲਾ ਸੇ ਪਕੜ ਕੇ ਸਰਹੰਦ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਇਆ। ਗੈਲੋਂ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਮਤੀਦਾਸ, ਸਤੀਦਾਸ ਬੇਟੇ ਹੀਰਾ ਮੱਲ ਛਿਬਰ ਕੇ, ਗੈਲ ਦਿਆਲ ਦਾਸ ਬੇਟਾ ਮਾਈ ਦਾਸ ਬਲਉਂਤ ਕਾ, ਪਕੜਿਆ ਆਇਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਚਾਰ ਮਾਸ ਬਸੀ ਪਠਾਣਾਂ ਕੇ ਬੰਦੀਖਾਨੇ ਬੰਦ ਰਹੇ। ਅੱਠ ਦਿਵਸ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਕੁਤਵਾਲੀ ਮੇਂ ਬੰਦ ਰਹੇ।

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Dayal Das son of Mai Das, grandson of Balu, great grandson of Mulla was executed by royal orders along with the Guru Sahib on Maghar Sudi 5, 1732 BK. (11 November, 1675) at the Chandni Chowk, Delhi. Also executed with him were Sati Das and Mati Das, sons of Hira Mal Chhibbar Brahmins of Bhagwat got.

Punjabi Version

ਦਿਆਲ ਦਾਸ ਬੇਟਾ ਮਾਈਦਾਸ ਕਾ, ਪੋਤਾ ਬੱਲੂ ਗਉਕਾ, ਪੜਪੋਤਾ ਮੂਲ ਚੰਦ ਕਾ ਬੰਸ ਬੀਂਝੇ ਕਾ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਬੰਸੀ ਭਾਰਦੁਆਜੀ ਗੋਤਰ ਪੁਆਰ·····ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦੁਰ ਗੈਲੋਂ ਸਾਲ ਸਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਸੈ ਬਤੀਸ ਮਗਸਰ ਸੁਦੀ ਪੰਚਮੀ, ਵੀਰਵਾਰ ਕੈ ਦਿਹੁੰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਚਾਂਦਨੀ ਚਉਂਕ ਕੇ ਮਲਹਾਨ, ਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਗੈਲ ਮਾਰਾ ਗਯਾ। ਸਾਥ ਮਤੀਦਾਸ ਸਤੀਦਾਸ ਬੇਟੇ ਹੀਰਾ ਮੱਲ ਕੇ, ਪੋਤੇ ਦਵਾਰਕਾ ਦਾਸ ਕੇ ਭਾਰਗਵ ਗੋਤ੍ਰੇ ਛਿੱਬਰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ।

Many other extracts from Bhat Vahis concerning the Guru period and later Mughal period can be given. All of them have great historical value. They may solve many of our problems involved in the study of our Gurus and hence deserve a careful investigation.

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Appendix IV

GURU GOBIND SINGH'S LITERARY ACTIVITIES —DASAM GRANTH

Guru Gobind Singh's literary heritage was very rich. Right from Guru Nanak all the Gurus were either literary lumanaries themselves or the lover of learning. Their contribution to the literary world was invaluable. The poetic compositions which they produced and which are incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth are eloquent testimony to the high level of their literary skill. Guru Gobind Singh inherited this tradition, moulded it to suit his purpose and enriched it by his own compositions and also by encouraging many poets and scholars to come forward with their compositions. In fact the Gurus, much more Guru Gobind Singh, employed literature to the service of mankind. They with its help tried hard to shape the psyche of the people to enable them to rise to the challenges for all times to come. Guru Gobind Singh himself has given inkling of his objective in one of the stanzas of Krishna Avtar. He says:—

> "I have rendered in the vernacular the tenth chapter of the Bhagwat with no other purpose than to arouse desire for a holy war.[1] (a righteous war of the Lord)" verse 249.

Quite a large number of compositions the Guru himself produced and many compositions were produced by the court poets or writers at the Guru's instance.

It is said that at Anandpur and Paonta, 99 poets and scholars[2] worked under the direct inspiration and encouragement of the Guru. They produced literature covering a wide range of topics, forms and thought, although the bulk of literature was, in fact, the reproduction and recreation of the

1. From this it should not be concluded that the Guru was a revengeful militarist. His wars were wars of defence; and his own poetry as well as his conduct shows a longing for peace and harmonious fellowship, which sometimes extended to his former enemies.
2. Refer to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji De Darbari Ratan by Piara Singh Padam.

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past heroic characters in lively poetic forms, possibly to tinker and articulate whatever vital was lying dormant in our social consciousness. This is the reason that it exuded optimism, yet there is nothing more wrong than to assume that the literature produced by the court poets of the Gurus was confined to uphold the aforesaid theme only. They, in fact, wrote and translated works on varied themes including state-craft and personal fortiles of human beings and state matters. But certainly no work dampenend the spirit or spread the gloom.

These men of letters formed an integral part of the establishment of the Guru. They discussed, deliberated analysed and evaluated in an atmosphere of freedom and fearlessness. They provided leadership to the people in the domain of thought as also shaped the public opinion. Himself a great thinker and builder the Guru rarely missed opportunity to attend their meets and was always anxious to accredit them. The whole thing looked like Plato's academy wherein each scholar wase engaged in the pursuit of truth. So that the scholars might not be distracted by the financial hardships each one of 125 scholars was provided liberally.[1] The Guru loved men of parts and men of letters and he spared no pains to collect them at Anandpur.[2]

As the tradition goes and as the nearly contemporary records aver, a good number of compositions of the court poets were aggregated in the form of a Granth known as 'Vidya Sagar.' The compositions of the tenth Guru were also compiled in a separate book or Granth, now commonly known as Dasam Granth.

These books were lost when the Guru after the evacuation of the fort, named Anandgarh crossed the flooded Sirsa, enroute to Chamkaur. The Guru did make attempts to collect his lost compositions, the copies of which, it was hoped, were in possession of his devoted disciples. But he could not achieve results owing to the short span of time for which he was destined to live after the battle of Muktsar.

The task of reproducing the works of Guru Gobind Singh was seriously undertaken after his death by his companion and disciple, Bhai Mani Singh. He worked constantly for about a decade on this project and finished it in 1721 or in 1726. He

1. Hem Raj was given ten thousand tanks. Kanvresh praises Guru for his liberal grant and euphemistically 'crores of rupees.' Hir Bhat also got handsome account.
2. Hukam name Sikhan val likhe jo, likhari Sikh hove so hazur awe (Reihat Nama Bhai Chopa Singh)

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was able to get some copies and filled in the gap from memory.

After the Sirsa episode, the Guru, however did not give up his interest in literary activities. He arranged Literary Meets—one in the Lakhi jungle in which quite a large number of poets and writers participated and the second at Talwandi Sabo where a galaxy of various scholars and poets gathered together and were stimulated to create compositions to step up the process of the mass-awakening. There a lot of literature was created. Arrangements were also made to impart education to the people. Sukha Singh the author of Gurbilas Patshahi 10 says that in addition to the extension of patronage to the scholars and writers, the Guru encouraged the people to study at the Ashram.[1]

DASAM GRANTH—A COMPENDIUM OF GURU GOBIND SINGH'S COMPOSITIONS

It is not possible to give the exact detailed account of the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh because much was lost to the generations owing to political storm the Guru had to face. However Dasam Granth which is, in fact, the collection of different compositions is ascribed to the Guru. The Dasam Granth can be classified as under :—

1) Philosophic works (literature of Divine Wisdom)	i)	Jap...199 verses
	ii)	Akal Ustat 271½ verses (incomplete)
	iii)	Gyan Prabodh 336 verses (incomplete)
	iv)	The Swayyas 32 verses
	v)	Shabads 12 verses
2) Bachittar Natak Granth (Historical works of literature of power)	vi)	Introduction 100 verses
	vii)	Apni Katha (Autobiography) 371 verses
	viii)	Avtars of Vishnu (political genius) 5297 verses
	ix)	Avtars of Brahma (Scholar of geniuses) 343 verses

1. Prof. Piara Singh Padam has given the list of 125 poets and scholars out of which seven namely Behari, Lal Das Khiali, Adha, Jado Rai, Fat Mal, Keso, Bhagtu attended the meet of the poets at Lakhi jungle.

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x) Avtars of Rudra=498 verses
Total=6609 verses

Chandi Charitra

xi) First Hindi version 262 verses
xii) Hindi version second 233 verses
xiii) One Pbi. version 55 verses
xiv) Shastra Nam Mala
xv) Pokhyan Triya Charitra
(stories of strength and stories of weakness) 7046 verses
xvi) Zafar Nama 111 verses
xvii) Hakayat— 757 verses
Total number of verses=Dasam Granth 17377 verses

Jap

This is the introductory invocation of the Granth. It contains 199 verses. It was composed about 1699 and accordlng to Macauliffe it was used as one of the compositions recited at the time of the creation of the Khalsa on the Baisakhi day of 1698. It has been written after the manner of 'Vishnu Sahsar Nama,' a composition which forms the part of Sikkand Puran. As in Vishnu Sahasar Nama, Vishnu's thousand names while bring out different attributes of Vishnu have been given, similarly the 'Jap' was composed to supply the Sikhs with a similar number of epithets of the creator. According to C. H. Leohlin, there are actually about 950 names in the Jap. In most of the 199 verses, God is described in negative terms. Accordingly the thousand names there are seventy five Muslim names, only a few of these being Rahim, Karim, Razake (nourisher), Arun (Pardoner), Salamai (Peaceful) Allah, Nirsharik, Karimar, Rahim, Husnual Charagh, Gharibun-Niwaz, Kamal Karim, Rajaul Rahim, Bhishtun-Niwas and many such others.

Razzak

A scrutiny of the names of God would lead us to conclude that the God is everything to him. He is a negative as well as

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a positive force. Every activity is His activity and everything in this world is this own projection. Yet everything was not He because He has no form or feature, no caste or image, beyond description, incomprehensible having no sign, mark or garb. God of Guru Gobind Singh is no particular entity giving rise to social particularism.

He was 'all in all and for all.'

All the verses are in the form of rhymed couplets and the metres and the words used are most expressive as well as most appropriate. The metre known as 'Bhujung Prayat Chhand' has been used by Guru Gobind Singh in this composition, and the dexterity add precision with which it has been used bespeaks of the genius of Guru Gobind Singh.

He was bitterly against the wasteful class of priests and pandits who were solely responsible for the abuse of religion in India. When Pandit Kesho Dutt asked him why he was deliberately giving all charity in honour and power to the low-caste people, Guru Gobind Singh replied:

"For them was I born
Through them have I attained glory and greatness.
Without them and without their loving support
What am I ?
There are millions of creatures like me on earth."

No marxist has ever sung such a song of the people which Guru Gobind Singh wrote a hundred and fifty years before Marx was born and about sixty years before the world heard of Rousseau and Voltaire. So strong was his faith in what is now known as democratic ideas that even when military dictatorship was expedient and even necessary, he left, to quote his own words "the care of his flock as well as his army not to a single person but to the whole community....."[1]

The Guru commences this book with an invocation to God of War, the All-steel. He ends with an attitude of tolerance that pictures Hindus and Muslims, and even people in widely scattered parts of the world seeking the same God and

1. Dr. Trilochan Singh : The work and genius of Guru Gobind Singh: Spokesman, November 1952.

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being blessed by Him; did not this represent the Guru's hopes for future when the dark days of warfare should be over?[1]

Akal Ustat

Akal Ustat is the best work of the Guru both from the point of view of subject-matter and literary qualities'. Akal Ustat means "Praise of the Immortal." This composition is undoubtedly the creation of the Guru himself and the doubt if it has been raised by any scholar is unfounded. The Guru envisions God as supreme in all respects, uses all types of epithets to praise Him. One can find negative as well as positive epithets that the crucial theme always remains the same i e. to say that God was all-supreme. The new thing which strikes one while scrutinising the composition is that God has been addressed as Sarbloh—All steel, Sarab Kal—All Death, Mahaloh—Great Steel, Kharag-ketu—Having a sword-on-His banner, Asipni—having in a mood-in-His Hand, that so early in the Granth commences the war cult. and the Immortal is pictured as "the impersonation and source of bravery".

In Akal Ustat the Guru touches varied topics. He makes copious use of Indian mythology but mythological figures and events in his hands are transformed into living characters engaged in the work of shaping the true spirit according to the plans of the Guru. He is careful lest he should be misunderstood as upholding by Hindu practices and this being so, he strikes upon them with force and extraordinary vigour. The Guru also touches upon the topic of religion in this composition. His religion was the religion of Nam. It is absurd to say that he believed to nationalise God or religion. He clearly and vehemently opposes the idea of the chosen people or a blessed nation.

The Arab of Arabia, The French of France
The Quareshies of Qandhar meditate on thy name.

In the 'Akal Ustat' the Guru revealed a close knowledge of the people like the Gurkhas, the Chinese, the Manchurians, the English people, the Arnesians, the Georgians and the Romans.

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1. C. H. Leohlin : The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood.

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Gyan Prabodh

Gyan Prabodh is another ambitious compsition which is incomplete. A valuable part is propably lost for ever. In its style and language, it is as perfect and grand as Akal Ustat. Out of 336 verses, 125 give the introduction. At the end of introduction, the Guru gives general plan of the book which to give a progressive evolution or religion in four stages (i) Raj Dharm (religion through political service) (ii) Dan Dharm (religion of charity) (iii) Bhag Dharm (religion through pious life of house-holder) (iv) Moksh Dharm (religion of seeking salvation).

Sawaiya (Quatrains)

Swaiya is a four-line stanza. There are thirty-three four-line stanzas in Dasam Granth. They are often recited during the preparation of the Amrit to be used in baptism. The topics of these sawaiyas are the meditation on the name of God, satire on ascetic practices and superstitions, true divinity and false divinity, rapport between the Khalsa and the Guru, and true religion and false religion.

Shabad Patshahi Das

There are twelve verses in Dasam Granth known as Shabad Patshahi Das. These verses exhort men to worship only the one God and not His manifestations or His creation "worship none-else except Creator—not even His creation" (155) The true ascetic is to consider his home as the finest and be an udasi at heart; have continance instead of matted hair and instead of uncut finger-nails, daily religious duties, the Name is to be the ashes applied to the body."[1] Minor gods and goddesses and images have also been subjected to criticism.

The Bachittar Natak—Apni Katha

Bachittar Natak Granth was the name given to Dasam Granth by Bhai Mani Singh. According to the celebrated author of Shabd Murat, it is the name given to Apni Katha, Avtars of Vishnu, Avtars of Brahma, Avtars of Rudra. But somehow this name although wrongly, has been used to denote only 'Apni Katha'. In this composition there are 371 verses. This is very important for a student of history, of sociology, of Indian mythology and of religion. Here is graphic description of wars

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1. C. H. Leohlin (trans) The Granth of the Tenth Guru, p. 45.

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of Bhangani and Nadaun, of the mission of the Guru, and of the rationale of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur. A sketchy account of the Guru's early life is also available. In the chapter while recording the events of his past life and dwelling on the mission for which he has been commissioned to this world, he demostrates the racial consciousness. The composition is a sort of autobiography written in rhymed verses.

Chaubis Avtar

This composition is composed of 5297 verses. It relates to the twenty-four manifestations (Avtars) of Vishnu out of which the Guru considers only ten to be historical figures—the rest being minor mythological figures. These twenty-four incarnates are : (1) The fish (2) Tortoise (3) Lion (4) Narayan (5) Mohani (6) Boar (7) Man-Lion (Nar Singh) (8) Bawan (9) Paras Ram (10) Brahma (11) Rudr (12) Jalandhar (13) Vishnu (14) No name : probably manifestation of Vishnu (15) Arhant Dev (16) Man Raja (17) Dhannatar (18) The sun, or Suraj (19) The moon, or Chandarma (20) Ravana (21) Harishna (22) Nar (23) Bodh (24) Kalki.

Avtars of Brahma

Chaubis Avtar is followed by a composition known as Avtars of Brahma which are Balmik, Hashap, Shukra, Bachais, Vyas, Kalidas. It consists of 343 verses. The account of these Avtars is followed by an account of eight kings.

Avtars of Rudra

In this composition two incarnations—Datt and Parasmath —are mentioned. Writing about incarnations, Dr. Trilochan Singh remarks "In his classification, he (Guru) makes it clear that Avtars of Vishnu were political figures, those of Brahma were scholars and poets and those of Rudra were the Ascetics out of which came the twelve schools of Yoga and the ten schools of Sannyasis. Gorakh Nath was the leader of one of the schools. No Puranic scholar has given such a clear and rational classiñcaation of the ancient History."

Chandi Charitar I, II and Var Sri Bhagauti ji, Chandi di Var

There are three versions of the story of Chandi in Dasam Granth. The first is from the Markende Purana. The second is labelled in the Granth as the Bachittar Natak version and is

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from Bhagvat Purana. The third is also based on Markende Puran. All three run with the gore of the battles between Durga and the demons, possibly an allegory of the battles between good and evil. Sardar Tarlochan Singh says, "while the Bachittar Natak Granth gives the history of the Aryan period Chandi Charitar and a considerable portion of the Sarab-Loh Granth gives the history of the pre-Aryan period. Chandi is a pre-Aryan deity still worshipped over a considerable part of India. Guru Gobind Singh gave these translations to inspire the worshippers of Chandi with heroism and revolt against the tyranny." The first two versions of Chandi Charittar are in Braj while Chandi di Var is in Punjabi. Dr. Dharm Paul Asha says "It is the first var of its kind in Punjabi and rates it one of first examples of Punjabi poems."

Shastar Nam Mala Puran

As the name indicates, this composition gives us the names of weapons of war which are praised as deliverers and protectors. The book runs 1318 verses and covers ninety-one pages in the Granth. Various weapons are given fanciful names. Among the simpler of these are names for arrows—Bow roaring, Skin piercer, Deer-slayer.[1] Many of these names of weapons are listed in the form of those riddles so dear to the Punjabi heart. These seem to be resolved in somewhat devious ways, for example:

[2]"Think hard and take the sword tarangni (stream). They say ja char (grass eater) then think of the word naik (Lord). At the end say the word Satru (enemy). Lo, Good friend, you have thought of the word meaning tupak (gun)."[2]

"The reason only seems to be that each thing mentioned is the enemy of the next; the grass-eater is the deer (ja is what is produced by the moisture of the stream, char is to graze); the lord and the master of the deer is the tiger, the enemy of tiger is the gun."[3]

There is quite a store of such riddles. The value of these riddles is to keep up the interest of the people in weapons of war.

Try-Charitra Pakhyan

Try Chritra Pakhyan means 'stories of deeds and adventure of women as heard from others', Pakyan means 'a short tale'

1, 2, 3. C. H. Leohlin : The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood.

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(refer to Apte's Sanskrit dictionary) and Charita means 'life', biography, account adventure, habit, behaviour, acts and deeds. So it is wrong to translate tales of the wiles of women as Charitra does not mean wiles as it is is often misunderstood.

The composition is in fact an anthology of stories serving nearly the same purpose as the stories of today "The stories remind the stories of Boccassio's Decameron so closely that some of the stories of Triya Charitra appear to be taken from Decameron which were probably conveyed to Master by Italian and Portuguese travellers. The Dutch and the Portuguse East India Company were well established and had their offices at Amritsar and Lahore during the time of Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Hargobind. There are two stories in the Dasam Granth from Portuguese courts and there are about two Englishmen interfering in the Indian states. So these stories serve the same purpose which the modern short stories serve."

The prevalent idea, that all the stories are about the wiles of women is wrong. "As a matter of fact there are about fifteen stories in which there are no woman character at all. There are a number of stories in which men betray women, who are only passive sufferers (stories No. 55, 85, 75, 108). There are good number of stories about the outstanding bravery of some women. Women are shown in their best in politics, battlefields and in the feats of adventure. The character of the woman in charitra No. 165 is the noblest one that any human life can present. There are stories of temples being used as meeting places for sexy lovers (88, 124, 146, 260, 283, 362 etc.) There are stories of young girls concealing illegal pregnancy. There are stories of rich ladies keeping poor he-men such as sweepers (24) or gardners (14). Such things are not uncommon even today and form popular subjects for the story writers of modern times. There are stories of ideal lovers for the love of whom Guru Gobind Singh has nothing but praise.

Damyanti, Hir Ranjha, Sohni Mahinwal, Mirza Sahiban, Yusaf Zuleikhan and Dropti are treated as ideal lovers and extract praise from the Guru.

The epilogue to this work is the prayer song of 24 stanzas commonly known as *Kabio Bach Bainti* the poet's invocation. The prayer song is used for preparing Amrit and it is one of the five daily prayers.

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Haqayat

The Haqayat are eleven in number and their language is Persian. The standard of the language used is said to be very good. The stories are not in prose but in verse. The belief is that these stories contain moral instruction for the Emperor Aurangzeb. Most of the stories are the Persian versions of Charitra Pakhiyan as for example Hikayat four is character 52, Hakayat no. 5 is charitar 267, Hakayat nine is charitar 190 and Hakayat 11 is charitar no. 246.

Each of these stories opens with praises of God and ends with a command to the cup-bearer to bring a cup of wine usually green possibly a play on the name of Hari which means 'green'.[1]

Zafar Nama

The Zafar Nama, or Epistle of victory was written at Dina in February 1705 in a reply to the invitation of Aurangzeb to the Guru. The language used was Persian. It was in rhymes and not in prose. Although it was written in the dark hour of defeat yet it betrayed no such feeling and in fact the title 'Zafarnama' which means 'letter of Victory' symbolises the optimistic spirit of the Guru. The letter is of immense value for a student of history. It refers to the perfidious behaviour of the Mughal officials, the unequal contest at Chamkaur, the bricking up of the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh in the walls of Sirhind, the unflinching faith of the Guru in the victory of good. The tone of the letter is of the person who is convinced of the justness of his cause and of winning ultimate victory. Various facets of the Guru's religious faith can also be identified in the letter. It has 111 verses. The Guru reminds Aurangzeb again and again the justice-loving God and the value of the moral principles.

The Guru upbraids Aurangzeb for breaking oath taken on the Quran by his officials on his behalf. This refers to the treachery of his generals in the battle of Anandpur when, after promising safe conduct to the Guru's forces for leaving the city, they attacked and looted the baggage train, only to find that the Guru had anticipated treachery and filled the

1. C. H. Leohlin : The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa brotherhood.

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baggage sacks with rubbish. He calls the Emperor the Oath Breaker (Paaman-i-Shikan).

POETIC ART OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

Wrapped in the classical style of his times, his poetry is rich in metaphor, abounding in beauties of sound and overbrimming with poetic niceties of diction and thought.

His metres are as full of variety as the subjects he treats of. He has handled with a remarkable efficiency over a hundred and fifty types of metres and forms of Hindi, Persian and Punjabi measures of versification. The bewildening variety of metres is not employed just at random. Each particular metre seems to have been very thoughtfully selected to contribute to the mood of the verse by its own peculiar rhythm.

Words never fail him. His masterly touch seems to transmute the leaden metal of common words into pure gold. At times, he makes use of words, which if taken out of context crumble down to non-sense poly-syllables, yet in their own context, they rather look indispensable. A master of many languages, he always uses the right word at the right place, and he does not care whether it is a Persian or a Sanskrit word, an Arabic or a Punjabi word, a Hindi word or one of his own coinages. In fact, many of his compound words e.g. Raju-ul-Nidhan, or Karman-Karime are a serene comingling of Hindi and Sanskrit and Arbaic or Persian like the Sikh culture itself which is a happy admixture of the Aryan and Semitic cultures.

The Guru embelishes his poetry with alliterations apart from making use of rich imagery and right type of words. The alliterations are never forced upon the verse; nor do they in any instance, impinge upon the thought-content. They come as naturally as leaves to a tree. The Guru decorates its poetry with many other devices as well. The following popular quatrain for example, abounds in anti-theses. In fact, every one of its lines contains one :

Ever since I held thy lotus feet.
None else my eyes behold
That Ram and that Rahim
The Purans and the Muslim Books
Say much but I heed them not

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The Simritis, Shastras, Vedas, Many secrets, they profess to have but never do I behold.

It's all thy grace, my saviour All thine, not a whit is more.

Thy 'feet' as against my 'eyes' 'much' as against 'not', 'many' as against 'none' are vivid contrasts building up delightful antitheses.

The Guru's poetry is marked also for its musicalness. The Guru knows which form of music is right for a particular moment. If he is telling you a romantic story (Shringar Rasa), the words will play a mild tinkle of sweet bells. If he is writing an ode describing a battle scene (Vir Rasa) the words will resound the beauty of drums.

If he is versifying a sad mood (Rudra Rasa) he will very skillfully muffle the drums. Whether the Guru writes long poems or short poems, epics or prayer-sermons, his skill as a poet always touches the highest water-mark. As a matter of fact, the Guru's poetry is a real beauty and a 'joy' for ever—more so because it comes straight from the spring-board of heart. Wrapt in the holy sentiment of love, it enraptures all those who only come to study it.

NAME OF THE COMPILATION

The name Dasam Granth became prevalent in recent times. Bhai Mani Singh's compilation is named as 'Bachittar Natak'. The Dasam Granth available at Moti Bagh, Patiala also bears this name. Patna wali recension was named Sri Granth. For the first time the Granth printed at Guru Khalsa Press, Amritsar, the name Dasam Granth Sahib ji was given to the Granth and since then it has been in vogue. The exact number of the verses composed by Guru Gobind Singh is not known. Recently a note of Guru Gobind Singh had been found by S. Raghbir Singh, which in its original form has been given by the learned scholar in his book 'Shabd Murat'. According to this note, the Guru composed 127255 verses excluding those of Zafarnama and a few others. All the verses had been composed (excepting Zafarnama) upto the 14th June, 1668 and this was also the day when the compendium of all these verses had been prepared. Kesar Singh Chhibbar says:—

"Small book (Granth) was got ready by the Guru himself as his place in BK. 1755. This book was loved by the Guru who wrote it himself. The Sikhs requested that this should be appended with Adi Granth. The Guru replied that Adi Granth

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was 'Granth Sahib' and this book was just a book presenting his mood." (Charan Chaudhwan Bansawali Nama).

DIFFERENT RECENSIONS

There are three better known recensions: one is with S. Gulab Singh Sethi of Delhi and the other two volumes are at Gurdwaras at Patna and at Sangrur. The version authorised by the Singh Sabha and generally available in print closely follows the version ascribed to Bhai Mani Singh. The sequence of contents is not the same in all the three compilations. In the compilation available at Sangrur the compositions such as Chandi Charitra II and Var Durga ki, are not included. Sahsahr Sukhmana, Var Mal Kauns ki, War Bhagauti ki are not there in the compilation of Bhai Mani Singh.

We, however, have given the description of the compositions as included in the Dasam Granth authorised by Singh Sabha.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE WRITINGS IN THE DASAM GRANTH

Scholars are divided in their views on the subject. Messrs Macauliffe, Cunningham, Narang and Bannerjee do not believe that all the writings in the Dasam Granth are of Guru Gobind Singh. Dr. D.P. Ashta, Dr. Trilochan Singh and Dr. Mohan Singh, however, assert that all the compositions in Dasam Granth are the creation of Guru Gobind Singh himself. We, howevere, are inclining to agree with this view. Our reasons are as under :—

(i) Most of the arguments given in favour of the view that all the compositions do not belong to Guru Gobind Singh are of negative nature and mainly subjective; as for instance, it is said that the time at the Guru's disposal does not warrant a work of this size, that a large number of mythological writings in the Granth follow a conventional pattern very common at that time, that it is most likely that the Guru as the spiritual leader of his people would have ever allowed his name to be associated with a composition of the type of 'Pakhyan Chariter'. Even these negative arguments cannot stand the test of historical scrutiny. The attention of the critics who have given the aforesaid arguments are drawn to the fact that Guru was no ordinary

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person, and to think that he had no time for such literary activities had no justification. In fact, even whatever he did outside the domain of his literary activities, is also no less astonishing, similarly, to say that since large number of writings follow conventional pattern, these could not be the creation of Guru Gobind Singh, is something which is obviously wrong. How can one deny the authorship of Guru Gobind Singh on this account? In the same way the argument that he, being a spiritual leader, allowed his name to be associated with the compositions of others, can easily be brushed aside in view of the positive arguments and proofs which uphold that the Guru himself was the author of the writings in Dasam Granth.

(ii) The strongest evidence at our disposal is the letter which was written by Bhai Mani Singh to Mata Sundri. A perusal of this letter shows that Bhai Mani Singh was commissioned by Mata Sundri to compile the various compositions of the Tenth Guru. To this end, he collected all compositions of the Guru. Bhai ji kept for himself one copy of each composition and transmitted the originals or copies of them to Mata Sundri at Delhi where she used to hand them over to one Shian Singh who was engaged to prepare the recension of the book in question. The book thus prepared by Shian Singh is lost to posterity.

Bhai Mani Singh, also prepared a file of the compositions of the Guru. According to Giani Gian Singh, the famous author of Panth Parkash, this task was accomplished in 1721 but Kesar Singh Chhibbar assigns 1726 as the year of the completion of the book. He further says that the compilation was completed at Chola Bagh at Amritsar.

Should we disbelieve the letter and also the evidence of Bansawali Nama and Panth Parkash ? Should we doubt the integrity of Bhai Mani Singh who compiled the compositions and who, it is an admitted fact, was a bosom companion of Guru Gobind Singh and one of the celebrated Sikhs of the Guru. Certainly we have no grounds for our doubts. Mani Singh could have never included any other composition except those by Guru Gobind Singh.

(iii) Of the compositions of Dasam Granth, Jap, Akal U stat, Gyan Prabodh, Shabad Hazare, the Chaupayis, the Bachittar Natak and the Zafarnama have been definitely ascribed to the authorship of the Guru by all the scholars. There is difference of opinion only as regards the compositions such as (1) Chandi Charitar (2) Chandi Charitar. (3) Chandi Di

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Var, (4) Chaubis Avtar, (5) Sastar Nam Mala (6) Pakhiyan Charitar and (7) Hikayat.

Even these compositions are the products of the Guru. Regarding Chandi Charitars or Chandi Charitar II (Trambi Mahatams) and Chandi di Var the Guru in 'Apni Katha' states that he himself composed Chandi Chritar.

Similarly Chaubis Avtar and Pakhayan Charitra and Hikayat were written by Guru Gobind Singh. The contention of the critics that these compositions were written by court poets hearing the names of Shyam and Ram is also unsound as Ram and Shyam were the pen-names of Guru Gobind Singh. There was no poet of the name either of Ram or of Shyam in the court of the Guru or in the contemporary world of poetry to use these pen-names. Prof. Padam opines that Mata Gujri, as the custom was in vogue did not utter the name of his son because it sounded akin to the name of her father-in-law Guru Hargobind and hence he called his son by the name of 'Shyam'. The Guru used it as his pen-name in his poetic compositions. In verse no. 1872 of Krishna Avtar he used Ram and in verse 1873 he used the pen-name 'Shyam'. It seems that he followed the poetic tradition of 'Hanuman Natak' of which the Guru was fond of and used Ram in that sense it has been used therein.

Moreover, at the case of 'Apni Katha' (autobiography) Guru Gobind Singh says "just as the gift of this enlightenment revealed to me the lives of the Avtars in the past, so have I written in the Granth. I have also written the story of Satyayug. In my work 'Chandi Charitra', I first have written a short version of Chandi Charita. Now I will write in detail from the beginning to the end."

Charitra Pakhyan and Hikayat are also undoubtedly the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh. The first proof is the version of the contents of Dasam Granth written by the Guru on page 615 of Bhai Mani Singh. Pakhayan means 'A Short Tale' and the word Charitra means life, biography account, adventure, habit, acts and deeds.' So the title means the 'Stories of deeds and adventures of woman as heard from others', wherein mention of Charitra Pakhyan is mentioned. Most of the scholars reject the Charitra Pakhyan and Hakayat on grounds of their subject-matter which according to them does not fit in the lofty teachings of the Guru. They, in fact, misunderstand the purport of these compositions which were written just to acquaint the people with the moods of womens, princes and various other personages.

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Similarly in the composition named Hakayat, there are different tales serving the same purpose as the stories of today. The epilogue to this work is the prayer song of 24 stanzas commonly known as 'Kabi Bach Bainti' 'The Poet's Invocation'. The prayar song is used for preparing the Amrit at the time of the initiation into the Khalsa Brotherhood and it is one of five daily prayers of the Sikhs. So no doubt is left about the authorship of Pakhyan Charitra.

There are some scholars who reject Chandi Charitra and Chaubis Avtar, Avtars of Brahama and Avtars of Rudra as the compositions of the Guru because in their opinion, the Guru did not believe in the Godess 'Chandi' and incarnations. The Guru nowhere says that these Avtars were his objects of worship. The Guru, in fact, in these compositions was treating these Avtars as historical or mythological figures. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh "No Puranic scholar has so far given such a clear and rational classification of Ancient History." The stories of these personalities as they are present in the Purans are mixed up with theology, cosmology and mythology. Guru Gobind Singh has treated them as real human figures and brought out their character and historical importance. Moreover, the Guru. even while describing the stories of different incarnates, does not miss opportunity to give expression to his personal faith and the object of the writings of this type. At the end of 'Ram Avtar' the Guru says :

Pai Gahe jap te tumre, tab te
kau ankh tare nahi anio.

[Ever since I have embraced Thy feet, O God, I have never brought any other deity under the eye of my faith.

Ram and Rahima are various deities of Koran and Puran and various other deities are mentioned. But I believe in no other but Thee O God.....]

Similarly at the end of Krishna Avtar, the author says, "I have given the story of Dasam Sakandh of Bhagwat in popular language. I have no other purpose in translating it except to inspire the reader to fight for dharma. (Avar Vasna Nah Kichh, Dharam Judh ka Chai). Chandi is never the article of faith with Guru Gobind Singh The Guru mentions clearly that the version of Chandi was taken from the Markande Puran, not with a view to worshipping Chandi but to inspiring the people having faith in Chandi, to fight against evil.

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Appendix V

ESTIMATE OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE TENTH GURU

Gigantic Personality

When we picture to ourselves the whole gamut of the life and achievements of Guru Gobind Singh, he appears to us a gigantic personality having myriad of layers—each layer being unique and beautiful in its own way. The all-round impression that emerges is that he was perfect in all respects and in whatever capacity he was called upon to play his part, his was the pursuit for excellence. He was extremely handsome with sharp features and with well-proportioned body. His face sparkled like full moon. The general effect of his personality was imposing, over-bearing and inspiring. His personal virtues were innumerable; he was cultured, decent, humane, sweet, responsive and tolerant. Straightforwardness, truthfulness and fearlessness were other hallmarks of his personality. He would never resort to under-hand means, treachery and corruption for the achievement of his objects. Another important trait of the Guru's splendid personality was his equivableness. Nothing could ruffle him. He had to leave Anandpur, his hearth and home, he got separated from his companions and life-partners and his dear sons; he could, with great difficulty, save himself from the murderous fire of the Mughal artillery; his two younger sons were bricked up alive at Sirhind, yet he did not lose the balance of mind.

Pursuit for excellence

Sthit Pragya

To crown it all. he would not relent from his resolve. He took even the greatest difficulties as part of the game. He compiled a new recension of Adi Granth, added to it his own compositions immediately after he had suffered a great loss in battles against the combined forces of the Mughals and the Hill chiefs. Obviously, he was 'Sthit Pragya' or equivable personality or perfect karm yogi.

Fearless

Besides this, the Guru was fearless and courageous. 'Zafarnama' the letter written to Aurganzeb is a living testimony to the marrow-deep fearlessness of the Guru. He wrote to Aurangzeb "I shall strike fire under the hoofs of your horses; I will not let you drink the water of the Panjab—what use is it to put out a few sparks when you raise mighty flame instead."

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Not only this, the Guru in this letter calls the Emperor a crafty and deceitful fox. He warns him of the nemesis which lay in store for him. 'Beware', says he, 'as you have oppressed the people much, so also the Khalsa will torment you. Now the day of retribution has come; God is very angry with you.'

An ideal householder

As a child, he aroused affection of his parents and elders. As father and house-holder, he showered filial kindness on his children in torrents. The innocent smiles of his children moved him and he felt thrilled when his children did something which was laudable. He did not miss anything which was essential for the sound growth of them. He cared for his household and made all possible arrangements for providing comforts to his family members. He never missed to attend to the household duties. His family was an ideal one. He functioned his family unit not as a dictator but as a co-partner or as the first among the equals. The family of his concept was not patriarchal in the fullest extent; it was a unit suffused with the spirit of harmony, equality and democracy. He believed in monogamy and advised his disciples to follow his advice. Polyandrous and polygamous families were contrary to his concept of family.

A great general

Similarly as a general or as a leader he was unequalled. Such men are rarely born who can start from a scratch, and yet within such a short time can prepare such a formidable army which could challenge the mightest of the powers of the time. Dr. Indu Bhushan Bannerjee's expression at this point is worth-noting : "In the 'Bachittar Natak' the Guru is rather modest with regard to his own performance and, as it is to be expected, attributes his successes to the Will of the Almighty, but from whatever little he says, it is not difficult to see what an accomplished archer he was and how unperturbed and dauntless he could be even in the midst of raining death. In forming an estimate of the military abilities of Guru Gobind Singh it must not be forgotten for a moment that there was a tremendous disparity in numbers and resources between himself and his enemies and the amazing thing is not that he lost but he could fight so long. The defence that he extemporised at Chamkaur was excellent. The Guru with only forty chosen companions, kept at bay for several hours a whole host of the opposing troops has hardly a parallel and the keen and discerning eye with which he chose the spot where the battle of Khidrana was fought and the army of Wazir Khan was compelled to retire leaves no doubt as to his tactical genius." The wisdom with which he raised forts at Anandpur and the quality of military training for which he made arrangement at the place

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bespeaks high of the standard of generalship the Guru provided. The Guru was a great military planner as well. In every battle, he fought with a definite plan and that was the reason that he put up a stout defence with only forty Sikhs against surging mass of human heads. No odds, however heavy they might be, dampened his valour and resolve; no personal danger made him shirk his duty. Wounds only stirred him to greater exertion.

A great military planner

In the capacity of a leader, the work which the Guru put in was a landmark.

A dynamic leader

When he was called upon to assume the leadership, the circumstances were not congenial. The Government headed by Aurganzeb was not in a mood to tolerate any movement, much less the Sikh movement which was committed to usher in an era of liberalism in politics, social affairs and religious field. It was so much determined in its resolve that it did not feel hesitant even executing those who were liberal or who had sympathy for liberal movement. Sarmud and a score of Muslim Sufies and Guru Tegh Bahadur had to suffer execution because of their liberal views in the sphere of religion and social approach. The internal organisation of the Sikhs known as Masand system had also gone rotton and the Masands being corrupt and extremely selfish, were most illfit to knit the community into a compact socio-politico-religious group. The Hindu Mass because of certain factors which had been operating since long, were completely demoralised. Hill Rajas were more interested in their feudal interests than in their people. The Sikhs had yet to come out of the shock they had suffered in the wake of the unjust execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Besides this, the age factor also did not favour the Guru. The Indians long accustomed to holding the greybearded as wise and mature had to be convinced that ripeness had no perennial link with the age. Guru's own means, material as well as human, were also scanty.

It is really amazing that the Guru, not withstanding all these adverse factors succeeded to create his following and then to lead them in such a way that they became instrument of progress not only of the community to which they belonged but also of their country—even of whole mankind. In this process, he exhibited remarkable insight into the human nature, their psychological reactions and responses to different problems and challenges, and into the social mechanism.

He exploited and harnessed all that was vital among the people. He unhesitatingly employed theology, literature,

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poetry and philosophy to prepare the mind of the people to serve his purpose. He, through training and education, succeeded to transform the psyche of the people. This was the reason that the people who were considered to be the dregs of humanity were made to long for freedom and for doing brave deeds. As a matter of fact, the potentialities which lay dormant under the killing weight of the Mughal despotism and the outworn social system as recommended by Hinduism, were awakened and forged into a dynamic force to live and die for the sake of truth and righteousness.

Did not allow narrow religious patriotism to develop

Still, the Guru did not allow his followers to develop narrow religious patriotism; he exhorted them to enlarge themselves to awaken to the ideal of establishing the rule of virtue all over the world. In this context the Sikh movement was different from the Maratha Movement of revival. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh says, "The Marathas, revival inspired by Ramdas's conception of the Maharashtra Dharma and cast into shape by Shivaji in spite of the genius of the Peshwas could only establish a military and political confederacy. Their endeavour to found a nation could not succeed because it was inspired by a religious patriotism that failed to enlarge itself beyond its own limit and awaken to the idea of united India. "The Sikh Khalsa, on the other hand, was an astonishingly original and novel creation and its face turned not to the past but to the future." His (Guru's) aim as a leader was not to lead the people in the context of contemparay circumstances but also to make them conscious of their role, even in the times to come. He enjoined upon his followers that they were the soldiers of God (Akal Purakh ki Fauj) and they should continue to strive to see that a society is established where there is no exploitation and no discrimination on the basis of caste, coat, clime, wealth, birth and sex, and there is freedom of expression, of adopting any profession and where everyone has a right to hold his head high and where there is mutual love for each other.

Aurobindo Ghosh's views

The Guru fashioned suitable reply to the challenges

The Guru was faced with a very difficult task. It was to give a suitable reply without resorting to atrocities and meanness. The Guru did give a suitable reply but he did it without leaving the road to moral values. Some scholars have given the name of crusade to the struggle of the Guru and his followers against the tyrannous contemporary rule; but it is incorrect. It would be insult to give the name crusade to the wars of the Gurus. It was much more than that. It was a sublime attempt perhaps made for the first time in human history—to fight forces of evil without losing the human soul.

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A great Thinker and Philosopher

His conribution to the domain of thought was also of immense value. In fact, he was a creative thinker. He did not believe in the purely idealistic tradition of the country according to which it was held that the material world was unreality and the instruments of knowing it that is to say, perception and experience are also unreal. What we see, perceive or experience is either illusion or ignorance. These views were constantly and deliberately hammered by Indian philosophers, notable among them being Nagarjuna and Shankar. According to them, we out of ignorance or illusion consider natural things as real. They illustrate their point by giving the example of snake and rope. They hold that sometimes rope is perceived as a snake just as illusion or ignorance creates the impression of rope being snake, similarly the natural things which are as unreal as rope-snake are illusory. This type of thinking when percolated among the people, it made them doubtful about their existences even and its social effect was to search reality somewhere else with the result that this philosophy, instead of bearing an imprint of progress, began to be used by the clever as a means to distract the attention of the people from the material world.

This type of working did not fit in the practical world. In his practical life, one has to run for water when thirsty. He has to eat food and wear clothes. It is of no use laughing at all this as banal talk. The real problem posed was a serious one. The evidence of practical life could not be over-looked. The snake perceived in the rope might not harm philosopher's contemplation but not so is the snake seen in the smoke.

The Guru was convinced that the tradition gripping tightly the minds of the people will not explain the things correctly and to the conviction of the people. The evidence of practical life could not be just over-looked, and in fact on the basis of this evidence, it was not difficult for the Guru to surmise that the grand theoretical structure so laboriously built up by idealists would not be in a position to hold.

He, therefore, did not accept it in toto. He accepted this much that the ultimate reality was something—may be named as God—who is formless, deathless, beyond space and time, self-existent all Enlightenment; but he did not believe in the fact that all the things perceived, seen and experienced in this world are illusory. Illusion there is but that is because of the faulty experience of faulty perception, not that the world—the whole world is illusion. From this it should not be concluded that the Guru began

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to believe in the other extreme i.e. to say that materiality is everything as it has been experienced and propounded by the Charvak school of thought or by the Marxist school of thought. The Guru did regard material things a reality and wanted that men should endeavour to improve their material world and for that matter the struggle of the Guru revolved round the establishment of the rule of the virtuous and the elimination of the evil-doers; but for the Guru it was not everything. The Guru wanted his followers to struggle and strive to be reality-like. He himself even in the midst of the material battles stole time to sit and mutter 'Thou art Thou art'—the only reality. He preached genuine love for 'Reality', but unlike idealists, the Guru exploded the myth that the love for it was not a force meant to be unsuccessful in this world. On the contrary, he said that it was meant to be successful only in this world, For outside it, there was nothing except God. If a Jivatma emerges to get free of this vortex of life and death, straight it gets merged in the Lord. Thus love means nothing for that world where everything is merged in the Lord. 'Such Khand' was no place of action, for it was already one with God. Love was a force meant for this world i.e. to say the Dharm Khand. This was indeed a revolution any idea for the practical world. By giving this idea, the Guru sought to win the earth back for the man. This is certainly one of the most important reasons that the Sikhs are not of other wordly. A Sikh looks upon the world as a genuine place to live, enjoy and to elevate himself. The social projection of this type of thinking on the part of the Guru was healthy and the Khalsa whom he created in his own image, became inspired group of men surcharged with the spirit of participating in the world to improve and ensure its progress. Besides this the Guru's idea of keeping up living separateness also exacts praise.

Asked his followers to keep themselves in living separateness

He asks his disciples to keep themselves in living separateness (as long as the Khalsa keeps up its living separateness, it will enjoy all my prestige). By living separateness, he meant that his disciples having raised themselves to the ideals he had set for them, should be conscious of it and be constantly vigilant that they were not swallowed up by the environment whose improvement was yet to be effected. This was a unique contribution, because it has been observed that the culture-pattern which gives up its living separateness and neglects its self defence will be swallowed up.

His ideas about religion were also striking and tinged with the revolutionary fervour. He repeatedly pointed out that his religion did not consist in turning increasingly towards

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the veiled stones, nor in approaching altars nor in throwing one self prostrated on the ground, nor in raising the hands before the gods, nor deluging the temples with the blood of the beasts, nor in heaping vows, but in beholding the height of God within a peaceful soul in dedicating one's mind, heart and soul to the service of humanity, which is the highest manifestation of the spirit of God.

"Ascetics who eat dirty food are no better than filth eating swines.

Yogis who pride in besmearing themselves with ashes
Are no better than donkeys and elephants that bespatter themselves with dust,
Recluses who retire to the grave-yards
Are no batter then jackals howling in the crematory
Solitaire monks who live in remote monastries
Are like owls living in deserted houses;
Anohrites waste life in vows of silence;
In what way are they better than the deer who lives and dies in silence in the forest.
What avails giving five calls in the name of religion
The Jackal cries time and again in the bitter cold night
Without enlightenment and divine knowledge
The fool sinks into the pit of hell
How can one attain divine wisdom
Without faith, love and devotion.

(Guro Gobind Singh—Akal Ustat)

CHAMPION OF THE PEOPLE'S CAUSE

It is an admitted fact that continuity in progress can be assured if the people at the helm of affairs of the society are not allowed to form a privileged class. It has been abserved that such people are thrown up to lead a society by the society itself, then they become privileged and concentrate their energies to safeguard their privileges instead of identifying themselves with the interest of the people as a whole. Such people block the progress. The Guru correctly understood all this. In Bachittar Natak he exposes different saints and leaders coming up on the stage of the world and instead of leading it to a higher destination delimit their activities and form their respective coteries, caring little for the welfare of the human race as a

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whole. The Guru bemoans that the truth, (the Guru used the word 'Par Brahm') is abjured and falsehood is followed. (Par Brahma kineh Na Pehchana). Humanity thus is not benefited. The Guru constantly endeavoured to keep his action and teachings continuously linked with progress and turned his face against the privileged people. This he did before Rosseau wrote his 'social contract' and 150 years before Marx formulated his Manifesto. The Guru said :

All the battles I have won, against tyranny,
And I have fought with the devoted backing of these people
Through them only have I been able to bestow gifts
Through their help I have escaped harm
The love and generosity of these Sikhs have enriched my heart and love;
Through their grace I have attained all learning
Through their help, in battles, I have slain many enemies
I was born to serve them, through them I reached eminence
What would I have been without their kind and ready help?
There are millions of insignificant creatures like me.

(Guru Gobind Singh—Dasam Granth)

Guru Gobind Singh was the first prophet in world history to identify himself completely with the will and destiny of the people and to give them a place higher than the highest. By doing this, he made them creative. Lest they should become privileged class or vested interest themselves, he filled their minds with the spirit of cosmopolitanism. He uttered to them :

All men have the same human form
In all men blazes the same divine light.

(Guru Gobind Singh—Akal Ustat)

When the Order of the Khalsa was ushered in on the Baisakhi day, "many Brahmins and Khatri followers murmured but the condemned race rejoiced...The murmurs of the twice-born increased and many took their departure but Gobind exclaimed that the lowly should be raised and that hereafter

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the despised should dwell next to himself." (History of the Sikhs page 64 ptd. 1849).

"The big ladder with which the Guru used to raise the people high was in the form of self dignity of man."

"Tremendous change was effected in the whole tone of national character. Even those people who had been considered as dregs of humanity were changed as only by magic into something rich and strange."

"The last apostle of the Sikhs effectively roused the dormant energies of vanquished people and filled them with a lofty, thoughtful longing for social freedom and national ascendency, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak."

(Cunningham : History of Sikhs p. 75.)

MISSION OF GURU GOBIND SINGH

The Guru in Bachittar Natak says :

I shall now tell my history,

How God brought me into the world as I was performing penance.

On the mountain of Hem Kunt

... ...

I performed such penance that I became blended with God.

... ...

When God gave me the order

I assumed birth in this Kal Age

I did not desire to come,

As my attention was fixed on God's feet

God remonstrated earnestly with me

And sent me into this world with the following orders :—

"When I created this world

I first made the demons who became enemies and oppressors

They became intoxicated with the strength of their arms

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And ceased to worship Me, the Supreme Being

... ...

I became angry and atonce destroyed them.
In their place I established the gods :

They also busied themselves with receiving sacrifices and worship,

And called themselves supreme being

... ...

I have cherished thee as My son
And created thee to extend my religion
Go and spread my religion there,
And restrain the world from senselessness."

... ...

Understand this, ye holy men, in your souls
I assumed birth for the purpose of spreading the faith, saving the saints
And extirpating all tyrants.[1]

From the reading of the above excerpt from Bachittar Natak, it emerges that Guru considers himself commissioned by God to spread God's religion, to save the saints and to extirpate the tyrants. Whether God commissioned him or not, that is a question to be decided by theologians; but as a student of history, it becomes clear to us firstly that the Guru had a mission to which he was committed and secondly he wanted to play the role of a saviour. Dr. G. C. Narang says that He (Guru) seems to have been deeply impressed by the idea which runs throughout the Puranic literature, the idea of the saviour appearing from time to time to uphold righteousness and destroy the oppressor and rescue the weak and innocent. Whether the Guru was impressed by the Puranic idea or it was just his own conviction, is a matter which requires deep probing, but one thing is clear that this idea was in tune with the calls of the times. Dr. I. B. Bannerjee remarks, "The sad plight in which he (The Guru) found his followers as well as the Hindus in general, religious strifes brought about by the persecuting policy of Aurangzeb, the prevailing corruption, ignorance and

1. Macauliffe: *Sikh Religion*, pp. 296-301.

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superstition and his own personal resentment at his father's execution must have generated in his mind an earnest conviction that this was undoubtedly the time for the rise of a saviour and his strong impulses and the force of circumstances in which he was placed soon led him to work himself up into a belief that he himself was the man the times need."[1]

The Guru througout his life lived this mission. He never shirked upholding goodness even at the risk of his life. There is not even a single example of dichotomy between his mission and his action. Even in the field when the enemies were unflinching in their determination to destroy his disciples, he would not waver in upholding the principle of goodness and of nobleness. This thing was clearly visible in his attitude, in his thinking and in his actions.

In fact this thing was the central theme of Guru's actions. Battles he fought but did not occupy even an inch of territory—his purpose being only to teach a lesson to the unjust enemy. He used his sword and allowed his followers to use it, but only for the protection of the poor and the helpless. All his wars were of the nature of 'Dharamyudh', the fight for dharma-righteousness. He never allowed the moral content to disappear from his actions.

Bhai Kanhiya gave water to a soldier belonging to the enemy's camp. The Sikhs got infuriated at and reported the matter to the Guru. To the surprise of all, the Guru patted him and said that he had recognised the right path.

Irvine and other scholars, mostly belonging to the 18th century state that the Guru's precepts prohibited all friendship with Muhammadans.[2] This is obviously wrong. The Guru perfectly understood that he was fighting against the Mughal Empire which was unjust and had lately become tyrannous, and not against the Muslims as such.

Amongst the best friends of the Guru were the Muslims such as Pir Buddhu Shah who sacrificed all his four sons for the sake of the Guru, and Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan without whose help the Guru might have not been able to effect his escape from Machhiwara. Gough is absolutely right when he remarks that the Empire rarher than Islam was the object

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1. I. B. Bannerjee. *Evolution of the Khalsa*, ii. p. 96.
2. Irvine. *Later Mughals*, Vol. I, p. 91.

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of his anomosity is shown by his readiness to make use of the services of Pathan mercenaries.

He was not the enemy of Islam

Irvine and many other scholars have jumped to the wrong conclusion because in the circumstances of the eighteenth century, the fine distinction referred to above, was difficult to maintain and it ceased to be valid for all practical purposes. The Mughal Goverment had become rotten to the core and it was becoming futile any longer to expect any justice from its officials. One trouble led to another and the Sikhs soon found themselves in the midst of a never-ending quarrel with the Mahammadans. This struggle inevitably coloured the views of the later writers and principles were attributed to the Guru, which find no support in his life and and writings."[1]

Nor was his mission to protect Hindu Dharma

Nor did he fight for the protection of the Hindus. Bullah Shah says in one of his couplets that if Guru Gobind Singh had not taken birth, most of the Hindus (particularly those of northern India) might have embraced Islam.

Similarly Santokh Singh asserts "Malechas would have flourished, and Hindus would have been ruined, and the religion of the Vedas and Puranas, would have been drowned, if Gobind Singh, exalted like Brahma did not come down as an Avtara of Vishnu."[2]

True that Hinduism was saved; but it happened as a part of bigger scheme of Guru Gobind Singh. Aurangzeb, with all his might, was determined to convert Dar-ul-Harb (the land of the Infidels) into Dar-ul-Islam (the land of the faithful). The Guru by arming his disciples and arousing them to resist the Mughals, set an example for the other Hindus that even the fear of Aurangzeb and the temptations of his offices failed to attract them to his faith.

As a matter of fact, it is most unfair to think that the Guru could have been the sworn enemy af a community or a class.

Guru was Cosmopolitan in outlook and in action

The Guru was a cosmopolitan in outlook and believed in the evolution of composite culture consisting of the best that was there in different types of tarditions in this country or countries. The Guru spells out his point-of-view in the following lines:

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1. I. B. Bannerjee, Evolution of the Khalsa, ii. 156-7.
2. Tincari Oadyopadhya, Life of Guru Gobind Singh (Bengali), p. 87.

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"The temple and the mosque are the same; the Hindu worship and the Muslman prayer are the same; all men are the same; it is through error they appear different ... Musalmans and Hindus adopt their customary dresses of their different countries. All men have the same eyes, the same ears, the same body, the same build a compound of earth, air, fire and water."

"Allah and Abhakh are the same, the Purans and the Quran are the same; they are all alike; it is the one God who created all."

The only thing that may be mentioned against the above belief of the Guru is the vendetta that he pursued against Wazir Khan of Sirhind but that was a different matter altogether, for to let Wazir Khan go unpunished would have been to deny the very basis of his creed which was (as already mentioned), that tyrants must be punished. Yet while believing, however, in his Heaven-ordained mission, he took care to see that his followers did not fall into the old Hindu weaknesses of deifying their leader. He emphatically asserted that he was human, and that to pay divine honours to him would be blasphemous:

Whoever says I am the Lord
Shall fall into the pit of Hell
Recognise me as God's servant only
Have no doubt whatever about this
I am a servant of the Supreme,
A beholder of the wonders of this creation.

BUILDER PAR-EXCELLENCE

Another great thing in the Guru was, that he was a builder par-excellence. He understood the exact nature of the challenges and fashioned suitable response to them. The society was in tight grip of caste prejudices, feudalistic tendencies, economic inequities, injustice, particularism, obscurantism, despotic tendencies, Islamic imperialism and inter-religious-groups tensions.

All these things had sapped the vitality of the people. The Guru fashioned a fitting respone to these challenges. He made efforts to inculcate democratic ideas, spirit of social and economic equality, sense of justice, besides building the national will to fight and resist evil in any shape. A few half-

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hearted attempts had already been made by Sufis and Bhaktas, but the real beginning had been made only by the Sikh Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh brought about their culmination. He did not stop at preaching and setting his own example but he set afloat an organisation to perseve, perpetuate and consummate his programme. The organisation he evolved was the Khalsa. According to A. C. Bannerjee, "The Guru's conception of the Khalsa was a fully democratic compact community, armed to the teeth, struggling to maintain what is considered to be the right path and fighting incessantly and without compunction, tryanny and injustice in all their forms."

The creation of the Khalsa speaks volumes of the organising genius of the Guru. It was atonce a social pattern, an instrument to further the cause of Sikhism, a culmination of what the previous Gurus had thought and preached, a vision to be translated into reality in future. Cunningham writes "Nanak disengaged his little society of worshipers from Hindu idolatory and Mohammedans' superstitions and placed them free on basis of religion and moral point. Amar Das preserved the infant community from reducing self into a sect of quetists or ascetics. Arjun gave his increasing followers a written rule of Conduct and civil organisation. Hargobind added to it the use of arms, and a military system; Gobing Singh bestowed upon a distinct political existence and inspired them with the desire of being socially free and naturally indepdendent.[1] But a mass of wax figures bearing the same hall mark and dressed up in the same fashion could not form an effective machine. He, therefore, declared that the Sikhs were under the special protection of God, and wherever five of them were present God was present there also.

They were further impressed upon with the idea that they were born to conquer. The Guru was an embodiment of hoep and confidence, and his followers were saturated with the same belief. The new salutation among the Sikhs was to be Wahe Guru ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru ji ki Fateh (The Lord's is the Khalsa, the Lord's be the victory). A strong conviction of one's being the chosen instrument of God, and the confidence it inspires, are the strongest guarantees of success and the Guru had given these guarantees to his followers.

They were asked to eschew caste and tribe-prejudices and entertain the ideal of democratic equality thereby enabling

1. Cunningham. History of the Sikhs, page 65.

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them to achieve unity which is the first step towards evolution of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. He supplemented this moral force by some other ordinances which are as under :—

(i) All the Sikh names were to end alike, as they do upto now, in the word 'Singh.'

(ii) All had to follow one form of salutation.

(iii) There was to be no external object of homage except the Granth.

(iv) The multiplicity of Hindu places of pilgrimage was too great to encourage nation's unity, so the Guru fixed upon Amritsar as the chief place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs; and that town has ever since been the Mecca of the followers of the Gurus.

(v) "The Guru was a philosopher" says Cunningham, "and understood fully how the imagination of men could be wrought upon. He thoroughly realised the hypnotising power of certain external form and symbols and knew what an inspiration, men often receive from a change in their outward appearances. He made it a rule that the Sikhs should keep five Kakas i.e. to say Kesh—hair, Kangha—Comb, Kirpan—sword, Kara—Steel bracelet and Kuchh—nicker brocker.

According to G.C. Narang, "The observances at once singled out the geniune Sikhs from the mass of the lukewarm Hindus and produced a cohesion in the internal body of the Khalsa which was in a short time to make a srtong Panth of them."[1]

A GREAT DEMOCRAT

Guru Gobind Singh's attempt and desire to make the masses creative, articulate and wide-awake led him to uphold democratic values. In fact this tendency had been the root theme of Sikhism since its inception and during the stewardship of Guru Gobind Singh, it was strengthened still more and instructions were formed not only to preserve it but also to make it the part of social consciousness of the people. The Guru abolished Masand system which, in course of time,

1. G. C. Narang. Transformation of Sikhism, p. 83.

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had outlived its utilily and Masands had started impinging on the freedom of thinking and action of the people by acting in an authoritarian manner. By raising status of the Khalsa to that of the Guru, by impressing upon the people that they were all the creation of the Creator, by rejecting distinction based on family, tribe, caste or class, birth or creed, and by regarding women as equal partners of men in the march of mankind towards progress, the Guru obviously clarified and demonstrated his stand for democracy and democratic values. The Guru had full faith in the concept of popular sovereignty. Some of the tenets of democracy can yet easily be found in the following instructions which the Guru gave to his followers:

"From now on you will be to each other a Bhai (brother). Work and not birth shall determine the place of each in society. You shall treat the women folk equal of men in every way.....you will remain ever prepared for sacrifice in the defence of the poor and the innocent and to fight tyranny and mis-rule even with the help of arms. You will be all earning householders and will share with other's all you have....."

Thus the Guru preached the principle of equality of men and women, of abolition of special privileges, of removal of caste prejudices, of the identity of treatment for all, for the service of the people, of acting on Gurmata; and the like. These cannons upheld by Guru Gobind Singh are nothing else but the theory and practice of democracy. It shows that Sikhism of the Gurus is democratic both in essence and orientation. But the Guru's concept of democracy was slightly different from the modern concept. In the words of Professor Gurubachan Singh Talib, "While it is correct that Sikhism is in its essence and orientation democratic, it must be clearly understood that the basis of modern political democracy is essentially numerical, while the kind of democracy visualized by the Guru is qualitative, as depending upon the guidance to the people coming from the noble and the wise in spirit. Without this basis, the fabric of the Guru's vision will not be erected."

MARX AND GURU GOBIND SINGH COMPARED

These days some scholars have taken fancy to compare the philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh with that of Karl-Marx, We also feel tempted to express ourselves on this point. Both these philosophies reject exploitation, pay respect to the honest labour and aim at ushering in a new era where everyone should

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lead his life in perfect peace, in full economic and political freedom. Besides both these philosophies allow force to be used in their struggle to achieve aim. But the resemblance does not go far. Guru Gobind Singh's approach to the problems was idealistic—materialistic, while Marx's approach was that of a materialist. Marx regarded proletariat an instrument of progress and called upon them to fight against bourgeoise. Guru organised the Khalsa in which the rich and the poor, the high and the low and the privileged and the unprivileged stood amalgamated and committed to establish the rule of the righteous. Marx politicalized the working class and Guru Gobind Singh politicalized the Khalsa. The working class was to establish Dictatorship of the proletariat while the Khalsa was to see that the rule of the virtuous was to be established. For Guru Gobind Singh, spiritual advancement was as important as material advancement but in the opinion of Marx, spiritual reality was a chimera and hence it should not be taken care of. Even the principle of progress was not alike in both the philosophies. Guru Gobind Singh regards fight between virtue and evil as essential imperative for the progress and enjoined upon his followers to side always with virtue. Marx, on the other hand, regards conflict between progressive forces and reactionary forces as a key to the understanding as to how mankind has moved on the road to progress and advises the people to side with progressive forces which should have always been determined' by economic factors.

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